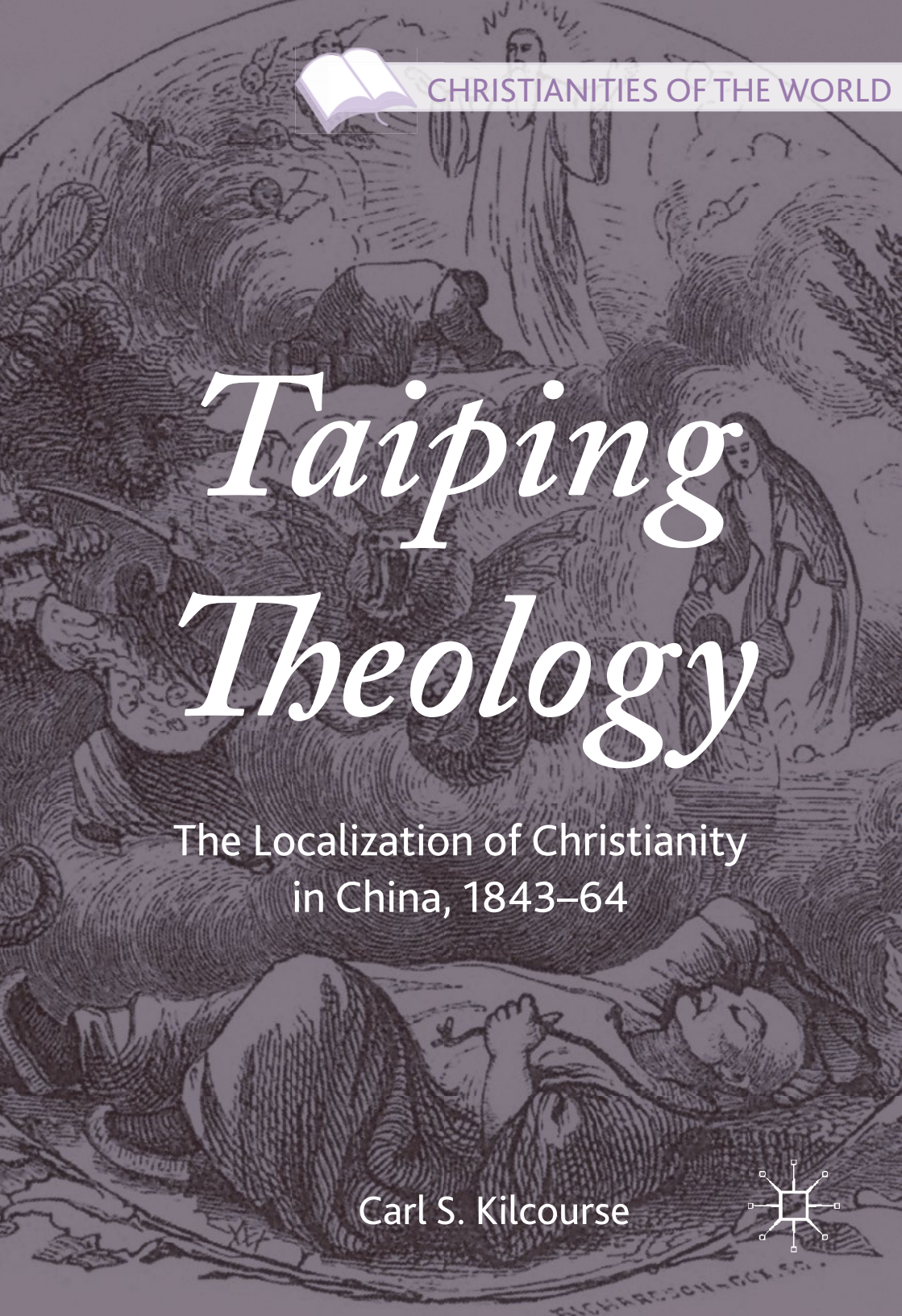

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Taiping Theology

The Localization of Christianity in China, 1843–64

Carl S. Kilcourse

Christianities of the World

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Nottingham, UK

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For Sinitta and my nana Audrey

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SCT 1	Wm. Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom (eds), *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, vol. 1: *From Earliest Times to 1600*, 2nd edn (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).
SCT 2	Wm. Theodore de Bary and Richard Lufrano (eds), *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, vol. 2: *From 1600 Through the Twentieth Century*, 2nd edn (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).
TR	Franz Michael and Chung-li Chang (eds), *The Taiping Rebellion: History and Documents*, vol. 2: *Documents and Comments*, parts 1–4 (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1971).
WR	Prescott Clarke and J. S. Gregory (eds), *Western Reports on the Taiping: A Selection of Documents* (London: Croom Helm, 1982).
NRSV	*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*, Anglicized edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

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This book uses the Pinyin system for the romanization of Chinese characters. When a document from *TR* uses Wade-Giles romanization in its title, I have replaced the words with Pinyin equivalents.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Previous scholarship on the Taiping Rebellion (1850–64) has neglected the localized form of Christianity that Hong Xiuquan (1814–64) and his closest followers created. According to many Chinese historians, the Taipings were peasant rebels who sought to overthrow the feudal system and replace it with an egalitarian society. An "opiate" like Christianity, they assumed, could never have galvanized peasants and produced such a remarkable proto-communist ideology. Many Western writers—from the mid-nineteenth century to the present—have also denied the Christian identity of the Taipings. Some of those interpreters, offended by the Taipings' deviation from orthodoxy, have dismissed their belief system as a heterodox or syncretic (that is, not *truly* Christian) religion. Others have simply marginalized that belief system by arguing that the Taipings were anti-Manchu nationalists who were driven by a racialized hatred of the Qing dynasty's (1644–1911) non-Chinese rulers.[1]

The cumulative effect of these dominant historiographical trends is that we are surprisingly ill-informed about the theology and religious culture of the Taipings. Despite the positive contribution of Thomas Reilly's monograph, there is still an apparent need for a study that systematically analyzes the Taipings' religious world (theology, ethics, and ritual) as a legitimate response to the Chinese Christian literature. The present study provides that analysis and reveals how the theology and religious culture of the Taipings constitute an early form of localized Christianity in China. This alternative approach not only challenges simplistic classifications of the Taipings as peasant rebels or anti-Manchu nationalists, but also allows

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us to locate the Taipings within the wider history of world Christianity—a history from which they (like many other "heterodox" Christian groups) have previously been excluded.

The "Distortion" of Christianity in the Taipings' Religion

One of the most popular assumptions in previous accounts of the Taipings' religion is that it represents a distortion of Christianity. This claim was first expressed by British and American Protestant missionaries who worked in China (and, in some cases, visited Taiping territories) during the 1850s. Many missionaries had originally viewed the Taipings as a possible vehicle for the Christianization of China, but greater exposure to their specific theological doctrines (in particular, the belief that Hong was the second son of God) resulted in a far less favorable analysis. In their increasingly hostile reports, missionaries rejected the Taipings' religion as a corrupted form of Christianity that was fundamentally incompatible with the orthodox core (Trinitarian, Christological, soteriological) of their various denominations. Elijah Coleman Bridgman (1801–61), the first American missionary to China, claimed that the religious creed of the Taipings was "through ignorance or perverseness, or *both*, grievously marred with error."[2] In a more disparaging report, the Episcopalian Samuel Schereschewsky (1831–1906) described the Taipings' interpretation of Christianity as "spurious" and denounced them as "pseudo-Christian insurgents."[3] Finally, William Armstrong Russell (1821–79) of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) asserted that the Taipings were "as far from orthodoxy … as the idolators [*sic*] they so affect to despise."[4] These three reports, which speak of error, inauthenticity, and heterodoxy, express the same underlying judgment that the religion of the Taipings was not Christianity. That judgment was based on the missionaries' common conviction that only those converts who accepted the "pure" truths of orthodoxy (and, therefore, the spiritual guidance of the missionary community) deserved to be recognized as legitimate Christians.

The claim that the Taipings distorted Christianity is not restricted to the accounts of British and American Protestant missionaries. The judgment has, in fact, been repeated by Christian scholars in academic interpretations of the Taipings' religion. Kenneth Scott Latourette, an American Baptist and pioneering scholar of the history of Christianity,

argued, "Only a complete misunderstanding of the message of the New Testament could have led to so great a travesty on the doctrines of Christ as that which existed at Nanking."[5] Latourette thus followed the original critics of the Taipings in assuming that their misrepresentation of Christianity was due to a misunderstanding of *the* scriptural message (that is, the one authorized by the agents of transmission). Similar assumptions underlie Eugene Boardman's work on the extent of the Taipings' borrowing from Christianity. Boardman argues that the impact of Christian doctrines on the Taipings can be seen not only in their acceptance of the Ten Commandments, but also in their specific beliefs about the nature of God and the redemptive value of Jesus' death.[6] Against these various examples of Christian influence, Boardman claims that the Golden Rule and Christian teachings on love, charity, and humility—points of emphasis that reflect his identity as a Quaker—were among the most notable moral omissions in the religion of the Taipings.[7] He thus concludes that while the Taipings were Christian-influenced, their religion "was not Christianity."[8] This conclusion has been repeated more recently by the scholar-missionary Samuel Moffett, who argues that the biblical teachings and imagery of Liang Fa's (1789–1855) *Good Words to Admonish the Age* (1832) were "wildly distorted in Hong's fevered mind."[9] Moffett thus brands the Taipings' religion, like Samuel Schereschewsky before him, as "pseudo-Christianity."[10]

The essentialist view of Christianity behind missionary accounts and the works of Latourette, Boardman, and Moffett continues to influence the ways in which scholars perceive the Taipings' relation to Christianity. In his work on the ideology of the Taipings, Vincent Shih asserts—in terms that are reminiscent of the missionaries—that "Hung and his group distorted Christianity."[11] Other more recent studies similarly dismiss the Taipings' belief system as a "bizarre and *corrupted* mixture of beliefs," a fusion of "*misunderstood* Christian ideas with old Chinese and Taoist elements," and "a hodgepodge of Confucian teachings and *misunderstood* Christianity" (emphases added).[12] These studies confirm that the depiction of the Taipings' religion as a corrupted and heterodox version of Protestant Christianity is an established interpretive mechanism through which missionaries and Christian scholars—from the mid-nineteenth century to the present—have protested at the adulteration of *their* Christian truths.[13] The discursive purpose of such protests for both groups of observers was to emphasize control over the meaning of Christianity, deny

its relativity, and reinforce their self-images as carriers, followers, and interpreters of *the* truth.

The collective implication of the above interpretations is that the Taipings' religion represents the unsuccessful reception of Protestant Christianity in China. Missionaries complained that the Taipings' religion did not reproduce the Christianity that they had transmitted, while later Christian scholars criticized its deviation from the orthodox standard that they accepted as Christianity. Their hostile responses to the Taipings' re-creation of Christianity were thus linked to what Nicolas Standaert describes as "an a-priori expectation that a 'successful' transmission is a transmission which keeps the cultural element in its 'pure' form."[14] Both groups believed that the source of the Taipings' deviation from that "pure" form was not the relativity of the religion (the Bible, they assumed, contained universal truths and meanings that were unaffected by its linguistic forms and cultural settings), but the intellectual deficiencies of the receivers (who "misunderstood" Christianity) and the corrupting influence of their Chinese cultural environment. Such criticisms, which blame the transformation of Christianity on flaws in the receiving community, suggest that the only legitimate response to translated Christian literature is to accept the "universal" truths of orthodoxy.

The present study will challenge this misleading assumption, and the exclusion of alternative forms of Christianity that it promotes, through a careful analysis of the Taipings' theological worldview. While the above interpreters used the Taipings' deviation from orthodoxy to suggest that their religion was pseudo-Christianity, this study will reinterpret the evidence and show that the Taipings constructed a highly original, localized version of the Christian faith. Significantly, the analysis will demonstrate that the Taipings' transformation of Christianity was encouraged by terms and themes from the Chinese Christian literature (in particular, the Chinese Bible). This key observation will question the essentialist notion that the most natural and proper response to the texts of Christianity is to reproduce a "pure," "orthodox" form of the religion. Such ideas support the misconception that the Bible has one universal, transcultural, and translinguistic meaning (or set of meanings) and conceal the fact that every new translation establishes connections with an indigenous culture and thereby facilitates the reinterpretation of biblical meaning and the localization of Christianity more generally.

The "Conflict" of Christianity and Confucianism

Long-standing assumptions regarding the incompatibility of Christianity and Confucianism have, like the distortion thesis above, exercised a significant influence over previous interpretations of the Taipings' religion. A common belief among theologically conservative missionaries in nineteenth-century China was that the Chinese people were bound to an ancient (and "heathen") cultural tradition that was fundamentally opposed to the Christian gospel. Many of those missionaries identified Confucianism as one of the principal ideological forces that resisted the Christian religion in China.[15] This notion of a fundamentally antagonistic relationship between the two belief systems was later embraced by the Christian scholar Kenneth Scott Latourette. Focusing on historical obstacles to the Christianization of China, Latourette argued, "Chinese culture opposed a solid and forbidding front to the entrance of Christianity. Its political structure was based upon one of the leading non-Christian systems, Confucianism."[16] Latourette thus believed, like many of the earlier Protestant missionaries, that "the structure of Chinese life" would have to be significantly weakened before Christianity could firmly establish itself in China.[17] Christianity and Confucianism could not, in other words, coexist.

The suggestion that Christianity and Confucianism were mutually exclusive traditions has found expression, both explicitly and implicitly, in various works on the religion of the Taipings. In his article on the Taipings' relation to Confucianism, Joseph Levenson argues that the rebels proclaimed an "anti-Confucian, non-reformist challenge."[18] While previous rebel groups (such as Buddho-Daoist sectarians) had challenged socio-political orders without threatening Confucianism's status as "the intelligence of society," the Taipings "thrust it off."[19] Levenson highlights the production of a new canon, the transformation of examination content, and the doctrine of the brotherhood and equality of humankind as examples of that challenge, but he sees the clearest indication of the Taipings' intellectual break with Confucianism in their radically original conception of Heaven (Tian).[20] The Taiping Heaven referred not to the "impersonal cosmic harmony" of Confucianism, but to a transcendent God. The Heavenly King (Tianwang) was chosen and given orders by that God, rather than simply being one with Heaven in essence. The Heavenly Mandate (*Tianming*) was, furthermore, a direct commandment from God, rather than an impersonal mark of election. While the Confucian Heaven was a timeless and immanent

source of virtue and social harmony, the Taipings' Christian God was a personal yet transcendent source of historical change and earthly power.[21]

In direct contrast to the above interpretation, Vincent Shih's examination of Taiping thought suggests that "in many respects the Taipings were thoroughly traditional."[22] Whereas Levenson views the doctrine of human brotherhood in God (and the associated concept of a universal spiritual family) as a sign of the Taipings' deviation from Confucianism, Shih argues that the Taipings embraced established Confucian beliefs regarding the filial duties of a son.[23] The notion of a universal spiritual family under God had not, in other words, undermined the Taipings' commitment to the particular relationships and obligations of Confucian moral philosophy. Shih finds further support for this claim in the Taipings' acceptance of the moral and political principle that filial piety (*xiao*) should be converted into loyalty to the sovereign. As Shih puts it, "Their idea that one should transform filial piety into loyalty was a reverberation of what the *Hsiao-ching* [*Classic of Filial Piety*] had said."[24] Shih thus interprets the Taipings' views on the relationships of father to son and sovereign to minister/subject as proof of a traditional, Confucian-influenced moral outlook. The Taipings, according to this interpretation, were defenders—rather than destroyers—of Chinese tradition.

Although the above works put forward markedly different arguments, they express the same fundamental assumptions regarding the relation of Christianity and Confucianism in the Taipings' theology. By emphasizing the differences between the Taiping and Confucian concepts of Heaven, Levenson suggests that Christianity (the Taipings' principal influence) and Confucianism were mutually exclusive traditions. Levenson sees in Christianity "a really drastic break with Confucianism," which represented a "dead intelligence" at the time of the Taiping Rebellion.[25] Shih's study has challenged this simplistic interpretation by highlighting areas of Confucian influence in the thought of the Taipings. However, in searching for evidence of a "traditional" mentality, he fails to recognize the full impact of Christian beliefs on the Taipings' Confucian-inspired attitudes (in particular, their doctrine of filial piety).[26] His work thus sustains—albeit from an alternative perspective and in a less absolute manner—the dichotomization of Christianity and Confucianism in Levenson's study.[27]

In response to this splitting of the Taipings' influences, the present study will examine not only how Confucian principles contributed to the Taipings' localization of Christianity, but also how the Taipings recreated Confucian doctrine via the beliefs of the imported religion. While Shih

views the Taipings' position on filial piety as a replication of Confucian teaching, Chapter 5 will show that they used religious ideas derived from Christianity to reinterpret the traditional understanding of the doctrine. Such observations of coexistence and interpenetration in the Taipings' theology will significantly undermine the notion that Christianity and Confucianism were irreconcilable traditions that embodied a conflict of civilizations.

The Politicization of Hong's Early Religious Message

One of the most contentious issues in the historiography of the Taiping Rebellion is the point at which Hong and his religious message became politicized. More than a simple question about the chronology of the rebellion, the timing of Hong's politicization has often been used by historians to support general conclusions about the identity of the Taipings and the nature of their rebellion.

In his article on the revolutionary message of the Taipings, Philip Kuhn argues that Hong's early vision of salvation was apolitical, individual-focused, and reconciliatory in tone vis-à-vis the Confucian tradition.[28] The revolutionary message of the Taipings only fully emerged, Kuhn claims, following the reception of Hong's ideas at Guangxi. Whereas Hong's native village (in Hua county, Guangdong) was at an advanced stage of settlement and his family (in particular, his father) enjoyed a significant position within the community, the Hakkas of the Guangxi hill country were at an earlier stage of settlement, much poorer economically, and involved in ethnic feuding with their Zhuang neighbors from 1842 onward.[29] In this volatile region, Hong's ideas (in particular, the dualism of the saved and the damned) provided a new spiritual explanation for ethnic conflict and filled the Hakkas with "a sense of their own unique righteousness."[30] The suggestion in this argument is that the Hakkas of Guangxi invested Hong's early religious beliefs with a political quality that would ultimately lead his Society of God Worshippers (Bai Shangdi hui) into rebellion against the Qing. Hong's ideas were not intrinsically rebellious, and they would have remained apolitical without the influence of the marginalized Hakka communities of Guangxi.[31]

Chinese scholars have made similar arguments to Kuhn regarding the timing of politicization and the importance of the socio-economic environment at Guangxi. They differ from Kuhn, however, in their

explanations of the precise reasons behind the politicization of Hong's religious message. Wang Qingcheng, one of China's leading authorities on the Taipings, argues that Hong's early texts were concerned with the moral salvation of the world and "lacked any revolutionary tendency regarding the overthrow of Qing feudal rule."[32] That apolitical religious message was, according to Wang, radically transformed following Hong's second trip to Guangxi in 1847. From that point on, Hong gradually emerged as the leader of a peasant rebellion against the Qing.[33] Wang asserts that the cause of this key transformation was not the socio-economic status of the Hakkas or their conflicts with other ethnic groups, but rather the objective phenomenon of "class struggle" (*jieji douzheng*). According to Wang's analysis, Guangxi was a hotspot of class struggle and the incessant confrontations between the lower classes, the feudal authorities, and the landlord militias induced Hong and the God Worshippers to move toward rebellion.[34] Other Chinese scholars have accepted Wang's claim that class struggle, rather than the religious ideas of Christianity, turned Hong into a political revolutionary against the Qing.[35]

Wang's argument that the revolutionary ambitions of the Taipings stemmed exclusively from the class struggle of Guangxi is connected to, and justifies, earlier works that depicted the Taiping Rebellion as "a peasant revolutionary movement against feudalism."[36] The Taipings, according to that interpretation, were peasant crusaders who opposed the feudal system and the "exploiting classes" (including landlords and commercial capitalists) of mid-nineteenth-century China.[37] This widely accepted claim has allowed historians to place the Taipings within a linear narrative of feudal decline and revolutionary progress toward socialism. In one outstanding example that sees modern Chinese history as a chain of causally related events, Fang Zhongying argues that if there had not been the Taiping Rebellion's challenge to China's "feudal autocracy" (*fengjian zhuanzhi zhidu*), then the Xinhai Revolution (1911) could not have overthrown it. And if there had not been the Xinhai Revolution's destruction of the Qing, then the New Democratic Revolution (Mao Zedong's revolutionary program) could not have replaced China's "semi-colonial" (*banzhimin*) and "semi-feudal" (*banfengjian*) societal form with a socialist society.[38] The Taiping Rebellion was, in other words, a necessary step in China's historical struggle to break away from feudalism and realize socialism. The prevalence of this discourse, which depicts the Taipings as revolutionary ancestors of the Chinese Communists, explains why Hong and the Taipings are still popularly remembered in China as peasant reb-

els, rather than religious revolutionaries who were deeply inspired by Christianity (see Figures 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3).

The Chinese scholars above collectively deny the importance of religion in pushing Hong and the Society of God Worshippers toward rebellion. Xia Chuntao, in the most comprehensive Chinese-language study on the Taipings' religion, has taken that argument one step further by asserting that the revolutionary message of the Taipings actually contradicted Christianity. Xia claims that the Taiping slogan "exterminate the evil and preserve the upright" (*zhan xie liu zheng*) directly conflicted with basic Christian teachings such as forgiveness, patience, and obedience.[39] That conflict, according to Xia, irrefutably proves that the Taiping Rebellion was neither a "religious revolution" (*zongjiao geming*) nor the outcome of biblical revelation.[40] Xia thus infers from an extremely narrow definition of Christianity (a passive religion of forgiveness, patience, and obedience) that religious beliefs and books were not responsible for the emergence of the Taipings' revolutionary message. This argument reinforces the broader claim that the roots of the Taiping Rebellion lay in socio-economic realities, rather than religious ideas.[41] It also upholds, on a deeper ideological level, Marxist assumptions about the role of religion in pacifying, rather than galvanizing, the oppressed.

The above scholars are agreed that socio-economic conditions were the significant factor behind the politicization of the God Worshippers. However, Kuhn's interpretation is the only one that finds direct support in the relevant historical documents. Theodore Hamberg's (1819–54) account of the origins of the Taiping Rebellion, which was based on information that he had obtained from Hong Rengan (1822–64; cousin and early follower of Hong Xiuquan), emphasized the deep resentment that the Hakkas and indigenous people ("Punti") of Guangxi felt toward one another. As Hamberg explained, "A feeling of enmity had long existed between the two classes, and every new incident served but to augment their hatred."[42] A separate report by Hong Rengan suggests that these new incidents, and the violent clashes that they provoked, originated in arguments over property rights. The Hakkas, it seems, had enraged local landowners by attempting to claim unused land and unoccupied houses in Guangxi.[43] When the two groups clashed in September 1850 (the culmination of earlier skirmishes), the defeated Hakkas turned to Hong and the God Worshippers for refuge.[44] These "displaced people," as Hong Rengan described them, would naturally have looked to their new religious leader for an explanation for their suffering and a promise of retribution.[45]

Fig. 1.1 A statue of Hong Xiuquan at Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou

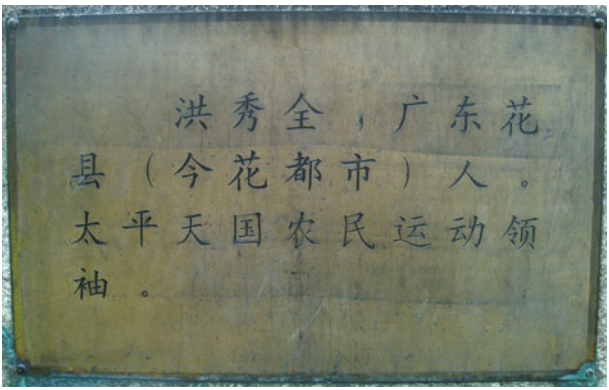

Fig. 1.2 A plaque attached to the statue of Hong. The inscription reads, "Hong Xiuquan of Hua county (present-day Huadu) in Guangdong. The leader of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom peasant movement." This characterization of Hong as the leader of a *peasant* rebellion (overlooking his religious identity and relation to Christianity) reflects one of the basic assumptions in the Chinese historiography of the Taipings

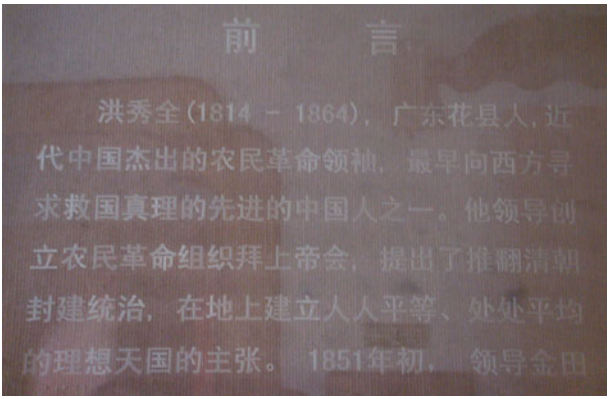

Fig. 1.3 The top half of a plaque from the Hong Xiuquan Commemorative Museum in Huadu, Guangzhou. The plaque describes the Society of God Worshippers as a "peasant revolutionary organization" (rather than a religious group) and claims that Hong advocated the overthrow of Qing feudal rule and the establishment of human equality on earth. This description allows the Taipings to be remembered as revolutionary ancestors of the anti-feudal and egalitarian Chinese Communists

Ethnic conflict brought dissatisfied and highly politicized Hakkas into the Society of God Worshippers, but the experience of religious persecution most probably convinced Hong and his closest followers that armed resistance was the only way to protect their growing spiritual community. Calls for the suppression of the God Worshippers appear to have emerged in response to Hong's early iconoclasm at Guangxi, which, according to Hamberg, caused the local population to be "incensed against them."[46] Prominent members of the community, such as an examination graduate named Wang Zuoxin, began to accuse the temple- and altar-smashing God Worshippers of having rebellious designs. Accepting those accusations (or, according to Hamberg's account, Wang's bribes), the county magistrate seized and imprisoned two of the most prominent God Worshippers (Feng Yunshan [d. 1852] and Lu Liu) in January 1848. Although Feng was later released, Lu died as a result of his suffering in prison.[47] The second martyrdom came in early 1850 when Wang Weizheng (son of Hong's cousin) was tortured to death by a jailer and his assistants, again at the instigation of Wang Zuoxin.[48] Jen Yu-wen and Jonathan Spence have rightly argued that the suffering of these early God Worshippers was a possible stimulant of revolutionary feeling at Guangxi. Spence claims that while poverty, droughts, and ethnic conflict were important sources of discontent, the failure to secure the release of two imprisoned followers was perhaps "the decisive factor that drove the God-worshiper leaders into a formal anti-government stance."[49]

Although the situation at Guangxi (ethnic conflict, religious persecution) pushed the God Worshippers toward rebellion, Thomas Reilly's monograph on the Taipings has shown that their core political challenge was based on Hong's personal response to the translated name of God. The title Shangdi ("Supreme Lord/God") not only connected the Christian God to an ancient Chinese deity, but also encouraged Hong to view the imperial office as a blasphemous and divinely condemned institution. While Chinese rulers of the classical period were called kings (*wang*), the first ruler of the Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE) introduced the imperial title *huangdi* ("emperor"; literally, "glorious lord/god"), which contained the second character from the ancient Chinese and Christian name for God. Against this historical backdrop, Reilly argues that the Taipings sought to reveal the blasphemous pretensions of the imperial office, re-establish the classical system of kingship, and restore the Chinese people's belief in Shang- (over *huang-*) di.[50] This argument, which challenges the disconnection of religion and rebellion in many Chinese interpretations, finds support in one of Hong's early works. In a text from the so-called "apolitical" period (before 1847), Hong openly stated that the title Di ("Lord/God") was reserved for God alone,

that earthly rulers should be called kings, and that anyone who usurped the title of God would suffer eternal punishment in hell.[51] Hong's early texts thus contained an implicit challenge to the emperor's legitimacy that was intimately linked to the *religious* belief in Shangdi.

The present study will challenge the popular assumption (well established in the Chinese historiography) that Hong's early religious message was fundamentally transformed at Guangxi after 1847. The addition of anti-Manchu rhetoric and claims that Hong was the true Son of Heaven represents not a radical ideological shift (from spiritual to political) under the influence of class struggle, but simply the extension of soteriological ideas (ancient Chinese worship of God; spiritual decline under the influence of demonic usurpers; Hong's ascension to heaven; the need to destroy China's demons and restore the Heavenly Father's *exclusive* status as Di) that Hong had developed before his second trip to Guangxi in 1847.[52] The class struggle literature in China has denied this relationship between Hong's early theological worldview and the political challenge of the Taipings in order to prove that the objective conditions of feudal society, and not Hong's Christian ideas, initiated their rebellion. This study will not pursue the opposite extreme, trying to prove that religious ideas *caused* the Taiping Rebellion. It will simply show that the Taipings absorbed their revolutionary challenge into Hong's original discourse of world salvation. Hong's religious response to the Chinese Christian literature was not, in other words, an irrelevance after 1847—it actually became the ideological foundation for the Taipings' political crusade.

The analysis of this work will also challenge the notion that Hong's revolutionary message directly conflicted with Christianity. Chapter 3, in particular, will reveal that themes from the Chinese Christian literature inspired several key aspects of the Taipings' vision of world salvation. Whereas Xia claims that Hong's mission to "exterminate the evil and preserve the upright" was incompatible with Christian values such as forgiveness, patience, and obedience, the analysis of Chapter 3 will show that biblical books and themes (Revelation 12, the Great Flood, and the Exodus) made a significant contribution to the development of that dualistic soteriological vision. The essentialist view of Christianity as a passive religion of forgiveness and patience masks those biblical themes (in particular, the notion of God as a destructive punisher) and thus indirectly supports the misleading conclusion that the revolutionary strand in Hong's thinking developed outside—and even in opposition to—Christianity. The reality, as this study will demonstrate, was far more complex. The biblical text not only encouraged Hong to view the imperial office as a blasphemous

institution (Reilly's "blasphemy of empire" thesis), but also inspired his core belief that God would actively intervene in history to destroy the idol-worshipping Manchus.

Vernacularization: The Cultural Impact of Christian Missions

The Taipings' religious world was a response to translated Christian texts (including the Bible) that missionaries and their Chinese assistants were circulating in Guangzhou during the first half of the nineteenth century. The present study's examination of that religious world can, therefore, contribute to existing debates about the cultural impact of Christian missions and vernacularized Christian literature in particular. A key question within those debates is: does the Christian faith, following its transmission to a new cultural environment, inevitably destroy and replace previously held religious beliefs and practices? Or is it able to coexist with, reapply, and even recreate itself through pre-existing indigenous traditions? A more specific question, which relates to the Protestant missionaries' particular commitment to vernacularization, is: are translated Christian texts instruments of control (linguistic and/or ideological) for the missionaries? Or do they empower local readers and encourage them to construct their own locally rooted forms of Christianity?

An essay by Arthur Schlesinger stands out as one of the clearest scholarly justifications for the identification of Christian missionaries as cultural imperialists. After dismissing the idea that missionaries promoted economic and political domination, Schlesinger argues, "The historian, seeking to explain the role and impact of Christian evangelism, must move on to the idea of 'cultural imperialism.' Cultural imperialism means purposeful aggression by one culture against the ideas and values of another."[53] This purposeful aggression refers to the missionaries' "deadly assault" on non-Christian beliefs and practices through "a most penetrating, powerful, and alien structure of ideas and values."[54] In contrast to ordinary cross-cultural communications, these deadly assaults were supported by economic, political, and/or military pressure. The defining feature of cultural imperialism in Schlesinger's work is, in short, an aggressive, "demoralizing," and seemingly irresistible attack on the beliefs and values of an indigenous culture.[55] In more graphic articulations of that core argument, Susantha Goonatilake and George Tinker have described global Christian missions as instruments of "cultural rape" and "cultural genocide."[56] The concept of cultural rape

expresses the idea that missionaries imposed Christianity onto unwilling local audiences, while cultural genocide suggests that pre-existing beliefs, values, and traditions were destroyed and replaced by a new Christian system.[57] The concepts thus make explicit the underlying themes of conflict (Christian vs. indigenous), imposition, and displacement in Schlesinger's theory of cultural imperialism. They also support the broader theoretical claim that the global spread of Christianity has helped to create a culturally homogeneous (Westernized/Americanized) world.[58]

Whereas Schlesinger simply views Christian missionaries as agents of cultural displacement (replacing indigenous beliefs, values, and traditions with Christian ones), the more recent works of Jean and John Comaroff have analyzed their role in what they call the "colonization of consciousness." Looking at the work of individual missionaries among the Tswana of South Africa, the Comaroffs claim that they were "human vehicles of a hegemonic worldview" who inculcated in local people the thought patterns, forms, and conventions of the colonizing culture.[59] This attempt to colonize the indigenous consciousness was, according to the Comaroffs, made possible by the missionaries' mastery of the Setswana language. In debating the identity of the rainmaker and the ultimate source of rain (God or ritual experts), for example, missionaries inducted the Southern Tswana into "the *forms* of European discourse" and "the modes of rational debate, positivist knowledge, and empirical reason at the core of bourgeois culture."[60] Vernacular conversation was thus used by the missionaries not merely to convert indigenous peoples to Christianity, but to impose on them the alien thought patterns and discursive conventions (reasoned and logically verifiable arguments) of the colonizing European culture. In this unseen role as the manipulators of consciousness, the missionaries confirmed that they were "every bit as effective, in making subjects, as were the stormtroops of colonialism."[61]

The Comaroffs have also discussed how missionaries promoted "linguistic colonialism" by translating the Christian message (orally and textually) into Setswana. More than simple attempts to rearticulate the gospel in a new linguistic form, the missionaries' translations expose, they argue, a systematic effort to control and colonize the target language. Indigenous terms, for example, were "subverted" and "commandeered" as missionaries invested them with previously unknown and explicitly Christian meanings (*moruti*, "teacher," became a minister of the Church; *modumedi*, "one who agrees," became a Christian believer). As "subtle acts of appropriation," rather than plain mistranslations, these commandeered terms were "all the more invasive."[62] In a similar argument on the

colonial character of missionary translations, R. S. Sugirtharajah describes the British and Foreign Bible Society's work in providing vernacular translations as "scriptural imperialism."[63] Although vernacular translation "appeared to be a noble cause," Sugirtharajah argues that local values were often altered or falsified as missionaries attempted to Christianize languages and cultures that they deemed to be incapable of communicating spiritual truths.[64] The concepts of linguistic colonialism and scriptural imperialism thus suggest that missionaries, as the arbiters of "correct" meaning, used vernacular translations to assert their supreme control over indigenous languages.

The present study will use the case study of the Taipings to challenge the simplistic association of world Christianity with cultural imperialism. Against the popular idea that global Christian missions inevitably lead to cultural displacement or genocide, this work will demonstrate that indigenous traditions—national and regional—not only survived the arrival of Christianity in China, but also significantly influenced the re-creation of the religion among the Taipings. Even if many missionaries associated conversion to Christianity with the renunciation of "heathen" culture, local converts like Hong Xiuquan have historically shown that the religion is capable of interacting with indigenous worlds and pre-existing cultural traditions. This fact is, of course, overlooked by nationalist writers and other academic interpreters who see alien cultural influences as threats to "authentic," self-contained indigenous traditions. Such writers, believing that particular cultures exist as fixed essences or "organic structures" that naturally evolve via endogenous forces, habitually confuse cross-cultural interaction with cultural destruction.[65]

Besides questioning the core assumptions of the cultural imperialism paradigm, the present study will offer an alternative perspective on the missionaries' employment of local languages. In their examination of the colonization of consciousness, the Comaroffs suggest that missionaries used local languages to impose their thought patterns, discursive conventions, and particularized meanings onto the indigenous peoples that they encountered. In direct contrast to that thesis, other studies have shown that vernacular translations undermined any desire on the part of missionaries to control the thinking, or colonize the consciousnesses, of their local audiences. Lamin Sanneh, for example, has claimed that since "language is the intimate, articulate expression of culture," the missionaries' use of the vernacular "was tantamount to adopting indigenous cultural criteria for the message."[66] Andrew Walls has similarly argued that the translation of Christian affirmations into other languages "set them

free to move within new systems of thought and discourse."[67] By tying Christianity to a new local language, the missionaries "imparted value" to the indigenous culture and enabled local people to understand and rearticulate the religion through a pre-existing system (embedded in the language) of ideas, values, and traditions.[68] Building on such observations, the present study will show that Chinese translations of the Bible and other religious texts made Christianity not an instrument of control for the missionary transmitters, but an object of cultural transformation among its local receivers. Whereas the Comaroffs emphasize the vernacular's role in the missionaries' colonizing project, this study will reveal how Chinese individuals using vernacular Bibles and books imposed *their* thought patterns, cultural symbols, and localized meanings onto Christianity.[69]

The purpose of this analytical approach is to highlight the key distinction between the *intentions* of missionaries and the *results* of their work. Many missionaries may have sought passive followers who would accept their spiritual authority and "orthodox" version of Christianity, but their work in vernacularizing and freely disseminating Christian texts was counterproductive to any desire on their part to control the religious thinking of local people. Translations of the Bible and other religious texts, as the analysis of this study will demonstrate, often enabled local converts to go beyond the transmitted truths and find the meaning of Christianity for themselves. This phenomenon shows that we need to look beyond the cultural imperialism paradigm and the missionaries' desire to give their "universal" truths to the world before we can fully appreciate the cultural consequences of global Christian missions.

Glocalization: A New Theoretical Framework

Glocalization, a portmanteau word taken from the cultural theory of globalization, is one of the key theoretical concepts that this study will employ in its analysis of the Taipings' theology and religious culture. The term glocalization first emerged during the 1980s and is now widely used by economists, sociologists, and cultural theorists to describe the complex dynamics of a globalized world.

As the transformative process behind the concept, localization occurs when a foreign object, idea, or institution is taken to a new cultural environment, exposed to local influences, and thereby transformed into an original expression of the indigenous culture.[70] Glocalization, a term that focuses more precisely on the object of that process, refers to the localiza-

tion of a *globally disseminated* product, ideology, or institution in multiple and varied cultural settings around the world. The term is frequently used in discussions on global business to describe the adaptation of Western multinational corporations or products to local styles, conventions, and cultural traditions. Roland Robertson, for example, defines glocalization in its micromarketing sense as "the tailoring and advertising of goods and services on a global or near-global basis to increasingly differentiated local and particular markets."[71] McDonald's is the most widely cited example of a global corporation adapting its products to differentiated local markets around the world. According to many interpreters, the global success of this particular corporation lies in an international effort "to organize and present itself as a local company, where it specifically aims to incorporate local taste and local dishes."[72] McDonald's in India, for example, adjusted itself to the cultural preferences of Hindus and Muslims (who abstain from eating beef and pork respectively) by introducing Vegetable McNuggets and a mutton-based Maharaja Mac.[73] In a similar case from China, KFC responded to the nationalistic promotion strategies of Chinese companies by emphasizing its use of local ingredients, decorating its restaurants in traditional styles, and offering special sales promotions during festival periods.[74] The purpose of such glocalizing strategies was to show that KFC, despite its American origins, understood the culture and particular needs of the Chinese people.

The above examples focus on the use of glocalization as a commercial strategy by foreign agents and multinational corporations. Other studies have suggested that localization is also a natural response for individuals and groups encountering alien and unknown cultural phenomena. In his examination of globalization and culture, Paul Hopper comments that "we relativize by making sense of the global and reproducing it within our own particular contexts, shaped as we are by local cultural influences."[75] Ogbu Kalu, in a study on world Christianity, similarly notes that "global cultural forms are *mediated* in the everyday lives of ordinary people in their localities" and that local conditions and cultural patterns "*filter* global flows" (emphases added).[76] Individuals, in other words, normalize and particularize attractive global phenomena by associating them (whether intentionally or not) with the symbols, styles, values, and traditions of *their* local worlds. As a result of this phenomenon, globally disseminated products invariably transform into a multitude of "glocal particularizations," or local forms of the global.[77] This transformative process is, furthermore, what enables the global to establish itself firmly in a wide variety

of cultural settings around the world. As Peter Beyer puts it, "[T]he global cannot be global except as plural versions of the local. Hence globalization is always also *glocalization* … the global expressed in the local and the local as the particularization of the global."[78] This universal tendency to particularize ensures that global phenomena often become vehicles for the re-expression of local beliefs, values, and traditions, rather than the means of their destruction.

The modern glocalization of Christianity is a direct product of the missionaries' (especially Protestant missionaries') work in translating and disseminating Christian texts around the world. Because of the intimate relationship between language and culture, vernacularized Bibles and other translated texts connect the Christian religion to indigenous cultural worlds and thereby facilitate its localization. This link between vernacularization and localization, which the present study will explore in its analysis of the Taipings' religious world, suggests that the glocalization of Christianity may be explainable through a four-stage process: (1) the global *diffusion* of Christian texts and symbols through worldwide missions; (2) the *vernacularization* of Christian texts within specific linguistic and cultural settings; (3) the *dissemination* of translated Christian texts among indigenous populations; and (4) the *localization* of Christianity by local recipients of vernacularized Christian literature. This theoretical framework, which views missionary work as the foundation for Christianity's transformation into a globally local religion, provides a new—and far less condemnatory—perspective on the cultural impact of Christian missions.[79] Again, this perspective rests on the critical distinction between the intentions of missionaries (few of whom would have viewed their activities as a foundation for localization) and the results of their work.

Although this study will examine the localization of a foreign religion within the cultural environment of China, it will not employ the highly discursive and value-laden concept of sinicization (*Zhongguohua*) to describe that process. Sinicization refers to the process by which foreign things are "made Chinese" (that is, adapted to the cultural world of China). In popular and official Chinese discourses, the concept is associated with the notion of giving "Chinese characteristics" (*Zhongguo tese*) to alien products, ideologies (for example, socialism), and institutions.[80] The principal reasons for avoiding this concept in analyzing Christianity's transformation under the Taipings are: (1) the concept of sinicization is closely linked to essentialist and nationalist discourses about the "superiority" and "charisma" of Chinese culture (and the implication that foreign

peoples/things are inevitably induced to conform to that culture following exposure); (2) the concept of sinicization implies that there is one universal Chinese culture and thus one level to localization, whereas this study will demonstrate that there were both national (Confucianism) and regional (local religious culture) dimensions to the Taipings' localized form of Christianity; and (3) this study seeks to emphasize the general, global phenomenon of Christianity being transformed when it enters a new locality or cultural setting, whereas sinicization suggests that the phenomenon is restricted to China.[81] Glocalization thus represents a more appropriate concept for analyzing and understanding the transformation of Christianity in the religion of the Taipings. It allows us to focus on the specific case of the Taipings while also looking beyond China to the wider process of Christianity's vernacularization and localization around the world.[82]

Chinese Sources

In order to establish the nature and extent of Christianity's localization, the present study will examine the religious publications of the Taipings alongside their Protestant sources of inspiration. A wide selection of original documents, taken from the National Library of Australia, the New York Public Library, the British Library, and the Cambridge University Library, will provide access to the theological doctrines, ethical system, and religious culture of the Taipings. Those documents include the early works of Hong Xiuquan (1844–48) and official books that were published during the course of the Taiping Rebellion (1851–62).

The earliest texts that this study will analyze were originally written by Hong Xiuquan before the formal start of the rebellion in 1851. Those texts, including the *Taiping Imperial Declaration* (a compilation of four early texts that were written between 1844 and 1847) and the *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle* (written in 1848), reveal the early religious message that Hong proclaimed to the God Worshippers at Guangxi. Three books that were published after 1851 for the purpose of educating children and teaching them the Taipings' religious worldview constitute a second group of sources. Those documents (*Poems for the Young* [1851], *Three Character Classic* [1853], and *Imperially Composed Thousand Word Edict* [1854]) show the core religious beliefs and ethical code that Hong and other Taiping leaders hoped to instill in their followers. Three essay compilations (published in 1853) that were produced by Taiping officials and

classically trained scholars who had joined the rebellion also highlight some of the Taipings' distinctive beliefs. The present study will employ various essays from those compilations to clarify and develop ideas found in other official Taiping documents.

Besides analyzing the doctrinal works of the Taipings, the present study will incorporate several official documents that describe the ritual practices used by Hong and his followers. Those documents (*Book of Heavenly Commandments* [1852], *Book of Heavenly Decrees and Proclamations* [1852], and *Book of Declarations Made during the Heavenly Father's Descent to Earth* [I and II; 1852 and 1853]), which record prayers and rituals that were used by the God Worshippers before 1851, will allow the present study to examine the localization of Christianity in the Taipings' religious culture. The final group of Taiping publications that will feature in this work includes books that were written or commissioned by the Eastern King Yang Xiuqing (d. 1856), such as the *Proclamations by Imperial Sanction* (1852), the *Taiping Songs on World Salvation* (1853), and the *Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature* (1854). These official books reveal not only the ideological preferences of Yang, but also how he, as the most powerful prince within the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, contributed to the religious thought of the Taipings.

The analysis of this study will be supported by two further documents that stand outside the abovementioned groups. The first of those documents, the *Poems of the Heavenly Father* (1857), is a collection of five hundred poems that Hong wrote for the instruction of his palace women. This source not only highlights the core elements of Hong's feminine ideal, but also offers a range of concrete examples that illustrate how women were perceived and treated within the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. To highlight the stability of the Taipings' belief system over time, the present study will also incorporate one of the official books that Hong Rengan—the celebrated Taiping reformer—published following his arrival at Nanjing in 1859. *A Hero's Return to the Truth* (1861) is unique among other Taiping publications in that it takes the form of a dialog between Hong Rengan and a Chinese official who had defected to the Taiping side. However, the content of the text shows that Hong Rengan, despite his exposure to more "orthodox" versions of Christianity, embraced (or at least tolerated) the most unique and provocative doctrines of the Taipings' theological worldview.

The Christian books that inspired Hong and the Taipings were: (1) Liang Fa's *Good Words to Admonish the Age* (1832), which provided Hong

with his first exposure to the religious beliefs and imagery of Christianity; and (2) the Gützlaff Bible, which was received by Hong in 1847 and later used by the Taipings as their official translation of the scriptures. The present study will use these two key documents to reveal how the Taipings transformed the symbols, concepts, teachings, and rituals that they encountered in Chinese Christian literature. It will also examine how terms and themes from the two texts—by creating points of overlap between the imported religion and the indigenous culture—inspired some of the Taipings' localized beliefs and practices. To support that analysis, the study will also draw on Hong's annotations to the Old and New Testaments. Although the Taipings published books from the Gützlaff Bible in 1853 (namely, Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, and the Gospel of Matthew), Hong's annotations are taken from a later Taiping version (published around 1861) that included minor changes to the wording and content of the original text.[83] Significantly, Hong's comments on various scriptural passages clarify specific Taiping beliefs and their precise relation to themes from the biblical text.

Besides official Taiping publications, Liang's *Good Words*, and the Gützlaff Bible, the present study will draw on Chinese classical texts to reveal how Confucianism acted as both an instrument of localization and an object of Christianization in the theological worldview of the Taipings. The classical texts that will be used for that analysis include the Four Books (*Analects*, *Mencius*, *Great Learning*, and *Doctrine of the Mean*), three of the Five Classics (*Book of History*, *Book of Poetry*, and *Book of Rites*), and the *Classic of Filial Piety*, which together made up the orthodox canon of Confucianism in the mid-nineteenth century.[84] As Hong spent many years studying for the civil service examinations in China, his knowledge of these classical texts would have been far greater than that of any ordinary Chinese person. Unsurprisingly, the ideas and values associated with the Confucian classics exercised a significant influence over the religious world that he created. That influence, as subsequent chapters will demonstrate, continued even after Hong had formally denounced the Confucian tradition in 1848.

Structure of the Study

The present study will develop its analysis of the Taipings' theology and religious culture in six chapters. Chapter 2 will contextualize the Taipings within the wider history of Christian missions to China. Adopting a

broad historical perspective, the chapter will look at the adaptation and indigenization of Nestorianism in the seventh century and two forms of Catholicism (Jesuit and Dominican) in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The analysis of these three historical models will reveal patterns of indigenization and particular cultural instruments (for example, filial piety and demonological rituals) that would later contribute to the Taipings' localization of Christianity. The final part of the chapter will discuss the Protestant missions to China in the first half of the nineteenth century. Focusing on the translation and dissemination of Christian literature, this section will highlight the role of Protestant missionaries and Chinese converts in facilitating Hong Xiuquan's encounter with Christianity.

Turning to the religious world that Hong and his closest followers created, Chapter 3 will examine the soteriological vision of the Taipings. Hong's vision of world salvation was not only the core of the Taipings' theological worldview, but also the ideological foundation of their revolutionary crusade against the Qing dynasty. As Hong's beliefs about the salvation of the world were based on a series of religious visions that he had experienced in 1837, some historians have uncritically dismissed his ideas as the product of a psychotic disturbance. Moving away from this "psychological" interpretation, the analysis of the chapter will show that the Taipings' core soteriological beliefs were the product of vernacularized Christian texts (in particular, the Chinese Bible) encountering an individual of Hong's socio-cultural background. By carefully analyzing the content, development, and sources of the Taipings' vision of world salvation, the chapter will confirm that it was a localized response to specific terms and themes from the Chinese Christian literature.

The focus of Chapter 4 is the Taipings' doctrine of God and the specific claim that Hong was the second son of God and younger brother of Jesus. Looking at the Taipings' anthropomorphic image of God, the first part of the analysis will confirm that Hong localized the Christian deity through the symbolism and conventions of the popular religious world. Turning to the most controversial aspect of the Taipings' theology, the second and main part of the analysis will discuss the Taipings' beliefs about God and his sons. Many of the Protestant missionaries who encountered the Taipings believed that Hong, in assuming the title second son of God, was blasphemously incorporating himself into the Godhead. Challenging this misleading interpretation, the chapter will show that Hong's main priority was to protect the oneness of God and the Heavenly Father's status as the sole divine being. The analysis will also reveal that Hong's highly

monotheistic doctrine of God was shaped by his soteriological vision (the focus of Chapter 3) and core Confucian values that he had internalized as a young scholar.

The fifth and sixth chapters of this study will focus more explicitly on the realm of religious practice. Building on the previous discussion of Hong's theological worldview, Chapter 5 will examine the ethical system of the Taipings. The analysis of the chapter will focus on three key themes from the ethical discourses of the Taipings: namely, human nature, moral uprightness, and filial reverence. The analysis of those themes will show that while the Taipings adopted a God- and commandment-centered moral system, they articulated their new behavioral laws within an ethical framework that was shaped by the assumptions and discourses of Confucian moral philosophy. The presence of that ethical framework confirms that the Taipings constructed a *Confucianized* Christian ethic, rather than passively absorbing the laws and moral principles that they found in the Chinese Christian literature.

Chapter 6 will discuss the ritual practices that the Taipings used to communicate their new belief system and maintain discipline within their communities. Looking at the sacrificial and charismatic (communication and healing) rituals of the Taipings, the chapter will show that they developed a localized religious culture that incorporated familiar ritual symbols and established practices of the popular religious world. Yang Xiuqing's role as communicator for God and supernatural healer is a particularly important example within the chapter, showing that the Taipings adopted a set of Pentecostal-type practices that were inspired by the ritual traditions of their local (south Chinese) religious environment. The analysis of those practices will complement the discussion of Hong's anthropomorphic image of God (Chapter 4) in highlighting the contribution of popular and regional influences to the Taipings' localized form of Christianity.

The final chapter of this study will discuss Hong's perception and treatment of the women who lived and worked in the Heavenly Palace at Nanjing. Drawing on a collection of five hundred poems that Hong wrote for the instruction of palace women, the chapter will carefully examine the behavioral norms that he established for his wives and female attendants. Focusing on Hong's feminine ideal and the specific duties of the palace women, the analysis will confirm that Hong maintained, rather than challenged, the patriarchal values that prevailed in late imperial China. This observation will fundamentally challenge the popular representation of the Taipings as an egalitarian movement that was committed to the prin-

ciple of gender equality. It will also reinforce the discussions of earlier chapters in highlighting the impact of Confucian assumptions and values on the Taipings' new religious world.

The collective purpose of these six chapters is to reveal how Christianity was comprehensively transformed by a group of Chinese individuals whose cultural influences ranged from the national orthodoxy of Confucianism to the local religious culture of Guangxi. Drawing attention to the various dimensions of that religious transformation, the present study will argue that the Taipings localized Christianity in their theology, ethics, and ritual practices. The analysis will also confirm that the development of the Taipings' localized form of Christianity was intimately linked to specific terms and themes from Liang's *Good Words* and the translated Bible. The vernacularization and localization of Christianity were, in other words, interrelated processes.

CHAPTER 2

Missions and Localization in Chinese History

Before we turn to the theology and religious culture of the Taipings, this chapter will look at Christian missions and examples of localization in Chinese history. The three missions that will be discussed in this chapter (Nestorian, Jesuit, and Dominican) are from markedly different time periods (Tang, Ming, and Qing) and their activities centered on diverse regions within the Middle Kingdom. Despite these differences of time and space, the missions have a shared analytical value in revealing how the Chinese cultural world has affected the strategies of missionaries and the shape of the Christian religion in China historically.

The first part of this chapter will discuss Nestorian Christianity in China during the early Tang dynasty (618–907). Although information on the Nestorian mission is limited, the available materials reveal a number of significant cultural adaptations in the religious message of the monks. The second and third sections will focus on the Catholic (Jesuit and Dominican) missions of the late Ming (1368–1644) and early Qing (1644–1911) dynasties, analyzing the character and extent of the missionaries' and local converts' attempts to reconcile the Christian religion with the cultural world of China. The analysis of these three missions will highlight not only historical patterns of adaptation and localization, but also some of the specific strategies and cultural instruments that have contributed to such transformations historically. The significance of those strategies of adaptation and instruments of localization (at least for the present study) lies in the fact that they were later employed by the architects of the Taipings'

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religious world. The models will thus provide us with a broad historical context for analyzing and understanding the localization of Christianity in the theology and religious culture of the Taipings. The final part of the chapter, focusing on the Protestant missions to China in the first half of the nineteenth century, will discuss the immediate historical circumstances (in particular, the translation and dissemination of Christian literature) that made Hong's encounter with Christianity possible.

Early Tang: The Nestorian Way in China

Persian Nestorians conducted the first major Christian mission to China during the early Tang dynasty. Led by a bishop named Aluoben, they crossed the Silk Road and arrived at the imperial capital Chang'an (now Xi'an) in 635. The Nestorian delegation was warmly welcomed by the emperor Taizong (r. 626–49), who allowed the foreign monks to reside in China and issued an edict of approbation in 638. The edict declared that the Nestorians' religion, as a "mysterious" doctrine that was beneficial to humankind, should enjoy free circulation throughout the empire. The Nestorians, taking advantage of the tolerant atmosphere, built a monastery at Chang'an and constructed many other religious buildings over the following 150 years.[1]

This brief account of the mission's beginnings is based on a commemorative stele (erected in 781 and later found in 1623 or 1625) that describes the history and beliefs of Nestorian Christianity in China. While the stele provides us with an overview of the Nestorians' religion (discussing creation, sin, the incarnation, and Christian rites), a number of documents found at Dunhuang in the early twentieth century reveal the specific doctrines that they communicated to their Chinese audience.[2] One of the most important early Nestorian texts is the *Book of Jesus-Messiah* (*Xuting Mishisuo jing*), which was written before the imperial edict of 638.[3] That book introduced basic Christian beliefs to its readers (for example, the universal lordship of God and the sinfulness of human nature) and offered a condensed version of gospel history from the virgin birth to the crucifixion of Jesus. Other early Nestorian works discussed the Trinitarian conception of God.[4] Taken together, these themes suggest that the Nestorians transmitted a fairly orthodox form of Christianity to the Chinese people. Even the Nestorians' theological enemies at home would have recognized the abovementioned doctrines (original sin, the virgin birth, and the Trinity) as core elements of Christian orthodoxy.

The themes of religious writings do not tell us everything about the nature of Nestorianism in China. The terms that Nestorian writers used in articulating their new Christian message confirm that they—like Buddhist monks before them—adapted their religion to the cultural environment of China.[5] The surviving documents reveal, as Pénélope Riboud explains, that the "Christian missionaries went through a process of linguistic adjustment," adopting a religious vocabulary derived from Daoism and Buddhism.[6] The Nestorian monks not only referred to their religion as the "Way" (*dao*) and the "law/teaching" (*fa*), but also used epithets from Daoist scriptures to describe the Christian God (for example, *chang gran zhen ji*, "eternal in truth and serenity").[7] The Nestorians took the adoption of pre-existing religious concepts to its extreme in the *Book of Jesus-Messiah*, which translated God as Buddha (Fo).[8] These terminological adaptations (whether intentional or not) suggested that the Christian religion was fundamentally compatible with the cultural world of China. Further confirming that cultural compatibility, the *Book of Jesus-Messiah* explicitly stated that all people had a moral duty to worship the emperor and their ancestors in addition to God.[9] This toleration of Chinese ancestor worship—an essential aspect of the Confucian and popular religious principle of filial piety—was a significant concession to the indigenous cultural world. It told Chinese readers that those who followed the new Nestorian religion could continue to fulfill their filial obligations to parents and ancestors.

This early attempt at cultural adaptation came to an end in 845, when an imperial edict ordered all foreign monks to return to lay life. As a consequence of this persecution, Nestorianism disappeared from China until its reintroduction during the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368).[10] The Nestorians of the early Tang nonetheless reveal the kinds of adaptations that would make Christianity culturally acceptable in China. The adoption of pre-existing religious concepts and the toleration of ancestral rituals, in particular, were later embraced by Jesuit missionaries as essential strategies for converting the Chinese people (especially the scholar-official elite) to the Christian religion.

Late Ming: Ricci's *Re*-presentation of Christianity

The Jesuits, also known as the Society of Jesus, were established by Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556) in 1534 and confirmed by Pope Paul III (1534–49) in 1540. As a religious order, they emphasized education, preaching, and catechetical instruction, and favored "an active, outgo-

ing spirituality in place of the traditional religious life in retreat."[11] That outgoing spirituality took the Jesuits not only into the streets, hospitals, and prisons of Europe, but also into distant foreign lands where the goal of bringing the world to Christ could be fervently pursued.[12] Within ten years of the Jesuits' papal endorsement, Francis Xavier (1506–52) had taken Christianity to Japan (1549), and in 1582 Michele Ruggieri (1543–1607) became the first Jesuit to secure official permission to stay within the Chinese mainland. Allowed to bring two companions with him into Zhaoqing (in Guangdong province), Ruggieri was soon joined by Francesco Pasio (1554–1612) and Matteo Ricci (1552–1610).[13] In 1588, Ruggieri returned to Italy and Ricci emerged as the most senior Jesuit missionary in China. Ricci's unique methods as leader of the mission enabled him, in spite of legal restrictions, to push toward the north and establish a permanent residence at Beijing in 1601.[14] Ricci's objective was to secure official recognition for Christianity at the Ming imperial court and thereby improve security and evangelical opportunities for the other Jesuit missionaries in China.[15]

As the early Jesuits considered the task of attracting the Chinese people to their new foreign religion, they would undoubtedly have referred to the experiences of their colleagues in Japan, who had already claimed 150,000 converts by 1582.[16] Following his arrival as Visitor in 1579, Alessandro Valignano (1539–1606) introduced a series of mission rules to adapt the Jesuits to the cultural environment of Japan. Valignano recommended, for example, that the Jesuits should live in Japanese-style houses, conform to local eating habits, and embrace a system of ranks similar to that of the Zen Buddhists.[17] This policy of external accommodation was not, however, matched by significant adjustments to the moral or doctrinal content of the Christian religion. Although the Jesuits had originally used the indigenous term Dainichi as the Japanese name for God, they later rejected the title when informed of its association with the Buddha Mahāvairocana of Japanese Shingon. To avoid any other problematic associations with non-Christian traditions, the missionaries introduced a transliterated name for God (Deusu) and replaced *jōdo*, *jigoku*, and *tamashii* with *paraiso* ("heaven"), *infierno* ("hell"), and *anima* ("soul") respectively.[18] This move toward transliteration shows that while the Jesuits in Japan were willing to experiment in *personal* adaptation, they were determined to maintain the uniqueness of Christianity vis-à-vis indigenous religions. The Jesuits in China, by contrast, went much further in their efforts to accommodate Christianity to pre-existing cultural traditions.

While Ruggieri had originally targeted Buddhism as the religious partner of Christianity in China, Ricci realized that the Chinese monks held an inferior reputation to those in Japan and that the Confucian scholar-officials were the most highly respected and powerful group in China. The Jesuit mission under Ricci thus focused more explicitly (but not exclusively) on the ideological and cultural preferences of the Chinese literati. The most conspicuous aspect of Ricci's strategic shift toward Confucianism was his decision in 1595 to replace the Buddhist robes worn by Ruggieri with the clothing of the literati.[19] To support this new image of the Jesuits as "Western scholars" (*xiru*), Ricci and his followers presented themselves as carriers of knowledge in the broadest sense. The Heavenly Learning (*Tianxue*) that they offered to the Chinese people included not only the religious and moral teachings of Christianity, but also the mathematical and scientific knowledge of the European world. By transmitting Western mathematics and science alongside Christianity, Ricci knew that he would consolidate his reputation as a man of broad knowledge and generate interest in the religious aspect and root of *Tianxue*—Christianity—among the literati.[20] Cultivating the image of a Western scholar was, however, only the first step in Ricci's policy of accommodation. More substantial adaptations, relating to the character of the Christian God and religion, would soon follow.

By the time that Ricci published *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* (*Tianzhu shiyi*) in 1603, he had developed his understanding of Chinese language and philosophy to the point that he could differentiate an original form of Confucianism from the later interpretations of the Neo-Confucian schools.[21] His work's central argument on Christianity's relation to Confucianism was based on that interpretive distinction. Firstly, Ricci rejected the association of ultimate reality with "voidness" (*kong*) and "nothingness" (*wu*) in Buddhist and Daoist thought. He then turned his attention to the Buddhist- and Daoist-inspired teachings of the Neo-Confucian schools, arguing that the concept of the Supreme Ultimate (*Taiji*) had corrupted an ancient understanding of God (Shangdi) in Confucianism.[22] The purpose of the Christian mission was, therefore, to overcome the "atheistic" metaphysics of Neo-Confucianism and *restore* the ancient Chinese belief in Shangdi, a deity synonymous with the Christian God. As Ricci put it, "Our Lord of Heaven [Tianzhu] is the Supreme Lord [Shangdi] mentioned in the ancient [Chinese] canonical writings."[23] This association of the Christian God with the classical Shangdi was a discursive tool through which Ricci and other Jesuits presented Christianity

as the restoration, extension, and even perfection of China's Confucian orthodoxy, rather than a heterodox threat.[24] Xu Guangqi (1562–1633), one of Ricci's high-profile converts, thus declared that the purpose of Christianity in China was to "supplement Confucianism and displace Buddhism" (*bu Ru yi Fo*).[25] This depiction of the Christian mission as a complement to Confucianism was both a classic case of cultural adaptation and an instrument of legitimization.

Besides adopting the image of a Chinese scholar and associating the Christian God with the classical Shangdi, Ricci pursued cultural accommodation through his approval of specific Chinese ritual practices. The two most significant rites that Ricci authorized were those for deceased ancestors and Confucius. Firstly, Ricci proclaimed that the ancestral rites, which were prescribed by Confucian morality, should be interpreted *mnemonically*. The Chinese people burned incense and placed food at graves and domestic altars not to satisfy the demands or hunger of their ancestors in the afterlife, but because such practices seemed to be "the best way of testifying their love for their dear departed."[26] Similarly, Ricci claimed that the Confucian ceremonies, such as lighting candles, burning incense, and offering dishes of food on the teacher's birthday, were *civil* rites (that is, signs of respect for a deceased master) as opposed to blasphemous acts of idolatry.[27] The ancestral and Confucian rites were, in other words, non-religious acts that a Chinese convert could continue to perform alongside the rituals of Catholicism. Like his discourse of original Confucianism, Ricci's views on Chinese ritual practices reveal a deliberate policy of marginalizing interpretations (for example, the religious belief that ancestral rites were sacrifices) that would undermine the Christian religion's alignment with Confucianism.

The Riccian Jesuits had sought to reconcile Christianity with the Confucian tradition of China, but the arrival of Dominicans and Franciscans during the 1630s signaled the start of that policy's demise. Adaptation through Confucian terms (Shangdi, Tian) had already been condemned by the Jesuit Visitor André Palmeiro (1569–1635) in 1629. The Dominican Juan Bautista de Morales (1597–1664) and the Franciscan Antonio de Santa Maria Caballero (1602–69) challenged the Jesuits' other cultural adaptations, such as their permissive attitude toward ancestral and Confucian ceremonies. Morales secured a papal condemnation of the Jesuit position in 1645, but a Jesuit delegation obtained a counter-decree permitting the Chinese Rites in 1656.[28] The Rites Controversy continued to divide missionaries, religious orders, and Church authorities through-

out the seventeenth century, but in 1704 the papacy acted firmly against the Jesuit policy of accommodation. Clement XI's (1700–21) brief *Cum Deus optimus* condemned the use of the Chinese terms Shangdi and Tian (permitting Tianzhu alone) and prohibited Christians from taking part in the ancestral and Confucian rites.[29] Charles Thomas Maillard de Tournon (1668–1710) communicated those decisions to the Kangxi emperor (r. 1661–1722) in 1706, whose response was to declare that missionaries would only be permitted to stay in China if they swore to accept the Chinese Rites as interpreted by Ricci.[30] However, the constitution *Ex illa die* (1715) reaffirmed the decisions of *Cum Deus optimus*, and in 1724 the Yongzheng emperor (r. 1722–35) conclusively proscribed Christianity as part of a wider campaign against "heterodox movements" (*xiejiao*) in China.[31]

Early Qing: Dominican Exorcists in Fujian

Focusing solely on Ricci and the court Jesuits could easily lead one to conclude that Chinese Catholicism ended during the eighteenth century. The expulsion of foreign missionaries (with the exception of those in Beijing and Macao) in 1724, the confiscation of Church properties, and the later suppression of the Jesuit order in 1773 could be viewed as the closing stages of a remarkable, but ultimately unsuccessful, foreign-led effort to make Christianity appear Chinese. The reality, however, is far more complex, with recent studies confirming that the Catholic mission to China was not an exclusively urban and elite-focused phenomenon. Between 1621 and 1630, the Jesuits expanded into the countryside regions of various provinces. Many baptized literati returned to their home regions during this period, establishing Christian communities at the county level and often inviting Jesuit priests to visit or permanently join them.[32] The Dominicans and Franciscans, who arrived in China during the 1630s, also built new Christian congregations at the county level. It was in such areas, with the support of highly mobilized lay communities, that Catholic Christianity was later preserved and transformed "from a recognizably foreign implant to a genuine expression of popular religious life."[33]

Looking at the Christian community of Fu'an (in Fujian province), Eugenio Menegon has shown how a Dominican form of Catholicism was integrated into the pre-existing structures of local religious life. The Dominicans first arrived at Fu'an in 1632 when local literati, who had previously been attracted to the religion of the Jesuits, persuaded Angelo Cocchi (1597–1633) to leave Fuzhou and join their community

of Christians.[34] In Europe, the Dominicans had been "staunch defenders of Rome" during the early Reformation and defended Catholic orthodoxy through their supervision of the Inquisition.[35] Carrying their order's strong commitment to orthodoxy with them into China, the friars of Fu'an condemned the "idolatrous" worship of popular gods and Buddhist icons, rejected the ancestral rituals that the Jesuits had permitted, and insisted on the observance of religious obligations such as fasting.[36] Despite that strongly iconoclastic attitude toward core symbols and practices of the local religious world, the Christians of Fu'an found "spaces of compatibility" between the newly imported faith and their pre-existing religious culture.[37] It is in these particular spaces that Menegon identifies the localization of Catholic Christianity at Fu'an.

Exorcistic rituals represent the first major example of localization in the Catholic community of Fu'an. Such practices were an established feature of local religious life, with mediums, shamans, Daoist priests, and Buddhist monks all offering rituals against evil spirits that attacked the bodies of individuals and the harmony of communities.[38] In this religious world, the Dominican friars presented themselves—and were accepted by local people—as a group of spiritual experts providing rituals against demonic forces. A commonly used exorcistic ritual was the baptismal exorcism in which the priest breathed on the candidate to expel the evil spirit from their heart. If the possessed individual had already been baptized, the friars used amulets (rosaries, crucifixes, holy images), blessings with holy water, prayers, and confessions as spiritual weapons for combating the demons. A number of friars also combined their prayers and holy objects with medicinal drugs to provide "supernatural" remedies for demon-inflicted illnesses.[39]

In one particular case of exorcism from 1676, a local Christian (having obviously witnessed or heard about Dominican exorcisms) suggested that Francisco Varo (1627–87) could heal a woman possessed by an evil spirit. As Varo was away in Muyang at that time, a group of local Christians took a crucifix and holy water to the woman's home and began the exorcism without him. The locals continued in their efforts for several days, but it was Varo's threat to celebrate fifteen masses in honor of St Dominic that ultimately secured the expulsion of the evil spirit.[40] This example highlights not only the status and popular perception of the Dominican friars as exorcists, but also the willingness of local Christians to employ their spiritual techniques independently.[41] Catholic Christianity, in other words, had become a new local *method* for overcoming evil spirits in Fu'an. It was

the latest option among many for individuals seeking to avoid or escape from the unseen demonic forces of the world.

Menegon's study shows that the friars of Fu'an localized Catholic Christianity not only through their demonological rituals, but also through the devotional practices that they promoted among their converts. The rosary devotion offers the clearest example of how the friars' new religion conformed to pre-existing modes of individual piety in Fu'an. Long before the arrival of the Dominicans, the people of Fujian (an area in which the devotions of Pure Land Buddhism were popular) would have recognized the rosary as a Buddhist devotional object used to count the number of times an individual had recited Amitābha's name (the practice of *nianfo*).[42] In Fu'an, the recitation of the rosary—a favorite devotion of the Dominicans—was a daily religious practice for Christians. Some of those Christians, as Dominican reports confirm, became particularly committed to the devotion. The Fu'an tertiary Thadeo Chen, for example, was so addicted to the rosary that he repeated the cycle of prayers eight times a day and woke up at midnight to recite them.[43] Significantly, one of the religious books that the Dominicans distributed in Fujian suggests that such cases of rosary addiction may have stemmed from a localized interpretation of the devotion's power. According to *The True Peace of Humankind* (*Renlei zhen'an*), an individual could use the rosary to avoid natural disasters and conceive a male child—two of the main blessings associated with the bodhisattva Guanyin.[44] Rosary recitation thus offered Chinese converts a new Christian way to obtain the benefits that they had previously sought from Pure Land Buddhism.

Local converts' concerns over the spiritual welfare of their ancestors prompted a further example of localization at Fu'an. Although the Dominican friars unanimously condemned ancestral sacrifices, they offered a new Christianized interpretation of filial piety (*xiao*) that allowed Chinese converts to support their deceased relatives in the afterlife. This new interpretation revolved around the Catholic doctrine of purgatory (*lianyu*), an intermediate state of purification that was conceptually related to the Buddhist notion of hell (*diyu*). In his *Explication of Catholic Filial Piety* (*Shengjiao xiaoqin jie*), which was distributed in Fu'an during the 1650s, Juan Morales claimed that Chinese Christians could ask the Lord of Heaven, through offerings and prayers, to free their ancestors' souls from purgatorial suffering. The friars also promoted almsgiving, abstinence, fasting, penances, and mortification as ways of accumulating merits that could be transferred to the souls of ancestors. For those requiring

professional assistance, a priest could offer prayers for ancestral souls during the celebration of the mass. Finally, *The True Peace of Humankind* explained that the rosary prayer could be used to rescue souls from purgatory.[45] These various examples show that the Dominican friars balanced their condemnation of ancestral sacrifices by offering Chinese Christians new religious avenues for the expression of filial piety. The discussion of those possibilities in a book dedicated to the topic of filial piety suggests that they were aware of, and willing to tailor their message in response to, the spiritual concerns of the Chinese people.

Strategies of Adaptation and Instruments of Localization

The three historical models discussed in this chapter show how the Chinese cultural world has affected and transformed the shape of the Christian religion in China historically. Some of those transformations were designed by the missionaries, but others were by-products of the terminology that they employed in their writings. Regardless of intention, each of the models confirms that the missionaries—including the ultra-orthodox Dominicans—adapted the Christian religion to the cultural environment of China. Most importantly, the models reveal strategies of adaptation and instruments of localization that link the historical missions not only to one another, but also to the later Taipings.

The Nestorians and Jesuits both explicitly linked Christianity to religious or philosophical traditions in China. The Nestorian monks associated their religion with Buddhism and Daoism by describing it as the "law/teaching" (*fa*) and the "Way" (*dao*). They even translated God as Buddha (Fo) in the *Book of Jesus-Messiah*. Later Jesuit missionaries adopted a more sophisticated—and definitely deliberate—strategy to establish a connection with the Confucian tradition of China. The Jesuits under Ricci wore scholarly robes, embraced the classical concept of God, and tolerated particular ritual practices that were prescribed by Confucian morality. Ricci's discourse on ancient Chinese monotheism, in particular, tied Christianity to Confucianism through a mutual (according to Ricci's interpretation) worship of Shangdi. That discourse, articulated by a man wearing the robes of a Chinese scholar-official, confirmed that Christianity was not an alien philosophy opposed to all pre-existing cultural institutions, but a religious tradition that complemented the beliefs of ancient Confucianism.

The socio-cultural purpose of Ricci's strategy of adaptation was to win approval for the newly imported religion and its agents of transmission.[46] In linguistics, the communication accommodation theory has shown that speakers who seek the approval of conversational partners will make their speech *converge* with that of their interlocutors through accent, choice of words and phrases, and morphosyntax. By contrast, speakers who seek to emphasize the social distance between themselves and their interlocutors will use exclusive linguistic elements that set them apart as members of an in-group to which their interlocutors do not belong—this behavior is known as linguistic divergence.[47] Applying these observations to the more general issue of cross-cultural encounter, one could argue that the Jesuits' adaptations represent a strategy of cultural convergence. Ricci's discourse of original Confucianism actually employed convergence and divergence simultaneously, reinforcing the in-group bond between Christianity and Confucianism by criticizing the "heterodox" traditions (that is, Buddhism and Daoism) behind the interpretive corruptions of Neo-Confucianism. The discourse thus protected Christianity against claims that it was a threat to the indigenous culture, showing that the religion was in fact part of an original Chinese orthodoxy (*zheng*) from which Buddhism, Daoism, and even Neo-Confucianism had departed.[48] As we shall see in the following chapter, such discourses are not exclusive to the foreign transmitters of newly imported religions. The desire for cultural legitimacy could also lead local converts like Hong Xiuquan to assert the indigenous roots of their recently acquired and ostensibly foreign religious beliefs.

The doctrine of filial piety, as one of the core components of China's Confucian ethical orthodoxy, contributed to the localization of all three forms of Christianity in China. Firstly, the Nestorians explicitly told their followers (in the *Book of Jesus-Messiah*) that they should worship not only the Christian God, but also the emperor and their ancestors. The Riccian Jesuits adopted a similar position vis-à-vis ancestor worship when they arrived in China almost a thousand years later. According to Ricci, the ancestral rituals were non-religious rites that a Chinese Christian could continue to perform after their conversion to Catholicism. Although the Dominican friars later rejected Ricci's interpretation and prohibited all ancestral sacrifices, they used the Christian doctrine of purgatory to reveal a number of new channels (for example, offerings, prayers, and the rosary devotion) for the expression of filial piety toward deceased relatives. The friars, in other words, reassured their converts that they could be both faithful Catholics and filial children. These three historical models of

indigenization through filial piety are of great significance to the present study, as later chapters will examine how filial piety acted as an instrument of localization in the religious world of the Taipings. The wider historical context of this chapter may thus help to explain why Hong and his followers interpreted and transformed Christianity in the way that they did.

The Dominican model shows that Catholic Christianity was localized not only through the moral doctrine of filial piety, but also through the beliefs and practices of popular religious traditions. The religion of the Dominican friars at Fu'an was defined not by its conformity to Chinese orthodoxy, but by the spiritual power and efficacy of its God, rituals, and prayers. The most striking demonstration of that spiritual power was the friars' (and subsequently their converts') employment of Christian rituals to overcome a long-established problem of the local religious world: namely, evil spirits and demon-inflicted illnesses. This phenomenon of localization via demonological traditions is unique to neither Catholic Christianity in China nor the cultural world of Fujian. As we shall see in subsequent chapters, demonological beliefs and practices made a significant contribution to the localization of Protestant Christianity under the Taipings. By examining the demonological aspects of Hong's salvation doctrine (Chapter 3) and the Taipings' employment of exorcistic healing rituals (Chapter 6), the present study will confirm that the Christian religion—in both Catholic and Protestant forms—was drawn into a local religious world of demons and malevolent spirits following its arrival in China.

Late Qing: The Protestant Missions to China

The Evangelical Revival (Great Britain) and the Great Awakenings (colonial America, USA) of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries supplied the spiritual impetus for the Protestant missions to China. Despite denominational differences, revival movements were united by their belief in "periodic extraordinary outpourings of God's grace."[49] During such "outpourings," inspired individuals recognized (or re-recognized) their guilt as sinners and turned toward God as "their only hope of salvation."[50] Rejecting the excessive formalism, rationalism, and spiritual complacency of their age, revivalist preachers proclaimed an emotionally charged message that stressed the depravity of humankind, God's saving grace in Christ, and the conversion experience through which a sinful person was reborn into a new Christian life of holiness.[51] Many individuals affected by that evangelical message dedicated their lives to the conversion of sinners.

The growth of Protestant missionary societies from the late eighteenth century onward (London Missionary Society, 1795; Church Missionary Society, 1799; American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, 1810) encouraged the most fervent of such individuals, on both sides of the Atlantic, to spread the gospel across the globe.[52]

Robert Morrison (1782–1834), a member of the London Missionary Society (LMS) whose life, theology, and vision "were inspired by the Evangelical Revival," arrived at Guangzhou in 1807.[53] With restrictions on public preaching and internal travel still in place (missionaries were restricted to Guangzhou and Macao before 1842), Morrison postponed direct evangelization and pursued more covert methods of bringing the Chinese people to Christ. He focused, in particular, on the translation of the Bible and the production of religious tracts in the Chinese language. Morrison's desire to translate the Bible was not, however, a simple product of circumstances in China. His dedication to the task stemmed from what Daniel Bays describes as "the instinctive ingrained Protestant conviction that every people needs to have the scriptures in their own language."[54] Since the early days of the European Reformation, Protestants had affirmed that the scriptures—as opposed to the institutions and traditions of the Church—were the *primary* source of truth and grace for the Christian community.[55] Thus believing that the biblical text mediated the saving grace of Jesus to the world, Protestant (and, more precisely, revival-inspired) missionaries saw the task of providing vernacular translations as one of their great spiritual obligations.[56]

With the help of his Chinese tutor Rong Sande, Morrison in 1806 was able to transcribe an earlier Catholic translation of New Testament portions (including a harmony of the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and the letters of Paul) at the British Museum.[57] Morrison took the transcription to China in 1807 and there developed his understanding of the Chinese language with the support of Chinese assistants. A Chinese man named Gao taught Morrison spoken Mandarin, written Chinese, and classical literature from 1808 to 1814. Gao also contributed directly to the production of Morrison's Chinese Bible, correcting idioms in his translations and proofreading his New Testament manuscript at various stages of the translation process.[58] By 1819, Morrison, in collaboration with his fellow missionary William Milne (1785–1822), had completed a full translation of the Old and New Testaments.[59] Morrison and Milne published their Chinese Bible in 1823 as the Holy Book of the God of Heaven (*Shentian shengshu*).[60]

The Morrison-Milne version, as suggested by its title, used the Chinese term *shen* ("god" or "spirit") as the translated name of God. In opting for this translation, Morrison was following the terminology of the Catholic manuscript that he had obtained in London. The translation of God as Shen, which drew the Christian deity into the discursive domain of Chinese popular religion, enabled Morrison to present his Christian teachings as the perfection of *familiar* religious ideas. As Morrison explained in 1808,

> When I make use of other names [such as Tianzhu, the Catholic name for God], they imagine that I bring to them another god—the God of my country.... I do not bring to them another god, but endeavour to convince them that their ideas of Shin [Shen] are erroneous; that there are not many gods, but one, and He is the same to every nation under heaven. I even let them retain the word Tëen [Tian] (heaven); but ingraft upon it proper ideas, as we do in our own language.[61]

This extract from Morrison's journal shows that he did not blindly follow the Catholic manuscript in translating God as Shen. Morrison was aware of (and even tried using) alternative translations, but felt that a familiar religious term would make the Christian God seem less strange and foreign to his Chinese audience. His strategy, therefore, was to persuade the Chinese people that the scriptures and doctrines of Christianity could provide them with a more accurate understanding of *their* (and everyone else's) Shen.

The Morrison-Milne translation was an extraordinary achievement, but later missionaries in China declared that the text was stylistically flawed and in need of revision. Walter Henry Medhurst (1796–1857) was one of the missionaries who called for an updated translation, quoting Liang Fa on the specific problems of style (for example, use of "too many characters" and "inverted and unusual phrases") associated with the Morrison-Milne version.[62] Together with Karl Gützlaff (1803–51), Elijah Bridgman, and John Robert Morrison (1814–43), Medhurst published a revised translation of the New Testament in 1837. Gützlaff completed and published their revision of the Old Testament in 1838. The revised New Testament was primarily the work of Medhurst, while Gützlaff acted as the principal translator of the Old Testament books.[63] Their Chinese Bible replaced the literalism of Morrison's translation with a more idiomatic style, but the most significant alteration was the selection of a new Chinese name for God. Whereas the Morrison-Milne Bible referred to the Christian deity as Shen, Medhurst and his co-translators

selected Shangdi, earlier used by the Jesuits, as the Chinese name for God (see Figures 2.1 and 2.2). Although Shen and Shangdi both allowed the Christian God to be viewed as a familiar (as opposed to completely alien) deity, the latter connected it to a particular Supreme Being from China's classical texts. The use of Shangdi thus suggested—like Ricci's discourse of original Confucianism—that Christianity was restoring and perfecting the religious beliefs of ancient China. That suggestion, as we shall see in the following chapter, later inspired one of the core beliefs of the Taipings' theological worldview.

Besides translating the scriptures, the early Protestant missionaries in China produced religious tracts for popular consumption. As the missionaries were restricted to Guangzhou, they had to rely on local converts to distribute their books among the Chinese people. One of the earliest and most historically significant Chinese colporteurs was Liang Fa. Originally hired to carve woodblocks for Morrison's Bible translation,

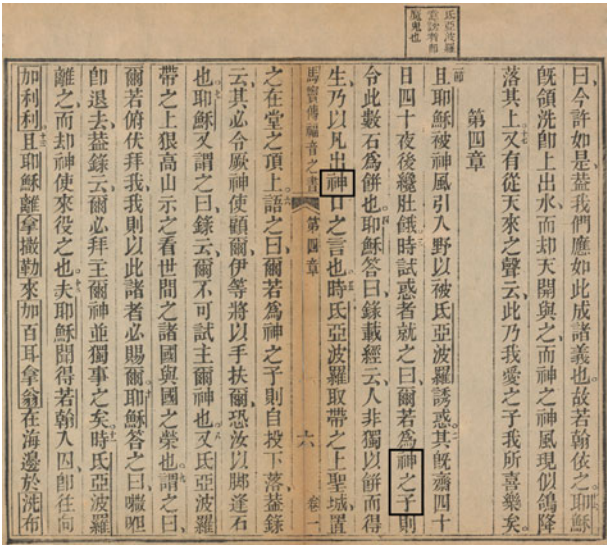

Fig. 2.1 An extract from Morrison's translation of the Gospel of Matthew (chapter 4), highlighting his use of the Chinese term *shen* to denote the Christian God. The three characters highlighted in the box read "son of God" (*Shen zhi zi*)

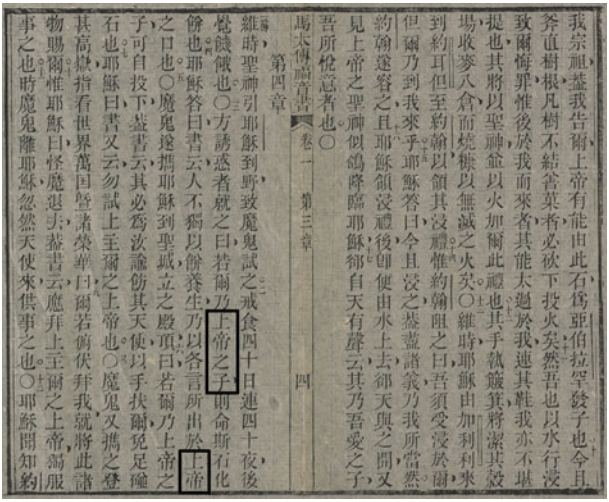
我宗祖基我告爾上帝有能由此石為亞伯拉罕裔子也今且
斧直樹根凡樹不結善菓者必砍下投火矣然吾也以水行浸
致爾悔罪惟後於我而來者其能太過於我連其鞋我亦不堪
提也其將以聖神金以火加爾此禮也其手執簸箕將潔其穀
場收麥入倉而燒糠以無滅之火矣○維時耶穌由加利利來
到約耳但至約翰以領其受禮惟約翰阻之曰吾須受洗於爾
但爾乃到我來乎耶穌答曰今且受之蓋盡諸義乃我所當然
約翰遂容之且耶穌領受禮後即便由水上去卽天與之開又
見上帝之聖神似鴿降臨耶穌卽自天有聲云其乃吾愛之子
吾所悅意者也○
馬太傳福音書 卷一 第三章 四
第四章
維時聖神引耶穌到野致魔鬼試之一戒食四十日連四十夜後
覺饑餓也○二方誘惑者就之曰若爾乃上帝之子則命斯石化
餅也耶穌答曰書云人不獨以餅養生乃以各言所出於上帝
之口也○三魔鬼復攜耶穌到聖城立之殿頂曰若爾乃上帝之
子可自投下蓋書云其必為汝諭飭其天使以手扶爾免足磕
石也耶穌曰書又云勿試上主爾之上帝也○四魔鬼又攜之登
甚高山指看世界萬国暨諸榮華曰爾若俯伏拜我就將此諸
物賜爾惟耶穌曰怪魔退去蓋書云應拜上主爾之上帝獨服
事之也時魔鬼離耶穌忽然天使來供事之也○五耶穌聞知約

Fig. 2.2 An extract from the Gospel of Matthew (chapter 4) in the Gützlaff Bible (Taiping reprint of the Gützlaff version, 1853). The characters in the boxes, which correspond to those highlighted in Figure 2.1, show that Gützlaff and his co-translators changed the Chinese name for God from Shen to Shangdi

Liang was baptized by Milne in 1816 and later ordained as the first Chinese Protestant evangelist.[64] Liang produced and distributed religious tracts following his ordination, with *Good Words to Admonish the Age* (*Quanshi liangyan*; 1832) being his most remarkable work. This colloquial book included extracts from the Morrison-Milne Bible, Liang's commentaries on specific scriptural passages, and discussions on various theological and moral issues. Those discussions show Liang's acceptance of key revivalist themes such as the corruption of human nature, the atoning sacrifice of Jesus, and the transformative influence of the Holy Spirit.[65] On the topic of God's name, Liang's *Good Words* followed the Morrison-Milne Bible in using Shen. Significantly, it also employed the extended title Shentian Shangdi ("God of Heaven Shangdi") in many of its references to the Christian deity. Liang's book thus complemented the revised Chinese Bible in suggesting that the Christian God was synonymous with the classical deity of China.

Recognizing the potential contribution of converts like Liang, Gützlaff organized a Chinese Union (Hanhui) of preachers and tract distributors in 1844. The purpose of the Chinese Union was to use local converts,

who were not subject to the restrictions on missionary activity, to spread the gospel to the Chinese interior.[66] Although Chinese preachers and colporteurs would lack the missionaries' depth of theological knowledge, Gützlaff realized that their linguistic and cultural familiarity would allow them to penetrate and convert local communities more effectively.[67] In its first year of activity, the Chinese Union's twenty members claimed 262 converts, a significant proportion of whom belonged to the Hakka ethnic minority. In 1848, one thousand colporteurs and one hundred preachers, spread over twelve different provinces, produced 487 baptisms. Gützlaff could easily have used these conversion figures as evidence of early evangelical success, but the greatest contribution of the Chinese Union was the dissemination of translated Christian literature among the Chinese people. Besides distributing numerous religious tracts, the Union's members ensured that the Gützlaff Bible was widely circulated within the Chinese interior.[68] Gützlaff's tract distributors thus created the first real opportunity for ordinary Chinese people outside Guangzhou to read and experience the biblical text.

Protestant Missionary Work: The Foundation for a Localized Christianity

The Protestant missionaries' commitment to the vernacularization and dissemination of Christian literature sets them apart from any other previous mission to China. In translating Christian books and distributing them among the Chinese people, the missionaries and their Chinese assistants (in particular, Liang and the tract distributors of the Chinese Union) unwittingly laid the foundations for the localization of Christianity in China.

Two particular events, both involving the giving of Chinese Christian literature, illustrate how the activism of the early missionary community in China made possible Hong's encounter with Christianity. Firstly, a Western missionary—thought to be Edwin Stevens (1802–37)—distributed Liang's *Good Words* to candidates for the civil service examinations at Guangzhou in 1836.[69] Hong attended the examinations and, like other candidates who stopped to listen to the missionary, received a copy of the book. Although Hong paid little attention to the content of the book initially, he later (after his final examination failure in 1843) used it to interpret the visions that he had experienced following his third examination failure in 1837.[70] Liang's *Good Words* not only provided Hong with

an explanation for those visions, but also inspired several key aspects of the localized theological worldview that he subsequently created.

Hong also received a full Chinese translation of the Bible before his second trip to Guangxi in 1847. Members of the Chinese Union, which was particularly active in Guangxi, may have provided Hong with his first copy of the Gützlaff Bible. Even if Hong did not obtain a full Bible via the Chinese Union, Taiping publications and the reports of missionaries confirm that he read both the Old and New Testaments during a two-month stay with the American Baptist Issachar Jacox Roberts (1802–71) at Guangzhou in 1847.[71] The Bible that Roberts used was the Gützlaff version, and Hong most probably left Guangzhou with his own personal copy of the scriptures.[72] The Taipings later adopted the Gützlaff version as their official Bible, reprinting several Old Testament books (Genesis, Exodus, Numbers) and the Gospel of Matthew in 1853. The reports of foreign visitors confirm that they later printed the entire New Testament and the Old Testament as far as Joshua.[73] Terms and themes from those biblical books were responsible, as we shall see in subsequent chapters, for some of the basic convictions of the Taipings' new religious world.

CHAPTER 3

The Taiping Vision of World Salvation

The previous chapter provided a historical and conceptual framework for examining the transformation of Christianity in the theology and religious culture of the Taipings. Turning to the first key example of that transformation, this chapter will discuss the core of the Taipings' theological worldview and the ideological foundation of their rebellion: namely, Hong's vision of world salvation. The Taipings' beliefs about the salvation of the world (or, more precisely, China) were closely connected to the religious visions that Hong had experienced following his third examination failure in 1837. While some historians have used those visions to suggest that the Taipings' idea of world salvation was the product of a "crazy" man's psychotic mind, the analysis of this chapter will show that it was actually the result of the Chinese Christian literature encountering an individual of Hong's socio-cultural background.[1] By examining the content and textual roots of the Taipings' vision of world salvation (rather than dwelling on the psychological condition of its principal creator), the chapter will confirm that it was a *localized* response to specific terms and themes from Liang's *Good Words* and the Chinese Bible in particular. The final section on the concept of Great Peace will reveal that the Taipings' soteriological vision was not only an example of localized Christianity, but also one of the most significant expressions of Christian-Confucian interaction in their theological worldview.

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From Failed Scholar to the "True Ordained Son of Heaven"

An analysis of the Taipings' conception of world salvation must begin with the life story and religious visions of its principal creator, Hong Xiuquan. Hong was an aspiring scholar of Hakka descent who spent the early years of his adult life preparing for the civil service examinations. For ambitious young scholars like Hong, passing the local examinations was the first step toward a position in the imperial bureaucracy. Hong showed great promise during his early study of the classics and convinced his teacher and family that he was destined for success. At fifteen or sixteen years old, he began to attend official examinations at the county level.[2] Although Hong passed the county examination with little difficulty, he subsequently failed in the prefectural licensing examination at Guangzhou. Hong attended and failed the prefectural examination for a second time in 1836. While attending the examination, he listened to a Christian preacher and obtained a copy of Liang's *Good Words*. When Hong failed for a third time in 1837, he fell into a delirium-like state and experienced a series of strange and (at that point) uninterpretable visions.[3] Despite failing for a third time and becoming emotionally exhausted, Hong did not give up his dream of scholarly success and took the examination for a fourth time in 1843. Following this final failure, which occurred only a year after China's humiliating defeat to the British in the Opium War (1839–42), Hong turned to the Christian book that he had obtained in 1836 and found in it an interpretation for his earlier visions and a new spiritual role for himself within the world.[4]

Presenting himself as a divinely ordained prophet (or possibly king) of God, Hong, together with three of his closest followers, toured Guangdong and Guangxi in 1844 to spread his newly acquired religious beliefs. While Hong returned home after the tour and continued to work as a village teacher, Feng Yunshan stayed behind to spread the new faith among the Hakkas of Guangxi.[5] In 1847, Hong and his cousin Hong Rengan visited the American Baptist Issachar Roberts at Guangzhou. Hong's new interpretation of his visions crystallized during this two-month stay with Roberts, when he read both the Old and New Testaments and studied Christian doctrine.[6] Hong subsequently traveled to Thistle Mountain in Guangxi and found that Feng had organized his local converts into a Society of God Worshippers. The members of the Society, which consisted of more than two thousand people in 1847, embraced

Hong as their spiritual leader.[7] Ethnic conflict brought more and more discontented Hakkas into the Society, while religious persecution at the hands of local elites convinced the leadership that they were now, with the support of their newfound God, engaged in spiritual warfare. The God Worshippers clashed with local military forces in late 1850, securing their first major victory at the Battle of Jintian in January 1851. Following that victory, Hong assembled the God Worshippers at Jintian and formally announced the establishment of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom (Taiping Tianguo).[8] The Taiping army left Guangxi in mid-1852, moving northward through Hunan (June–December 1852) to the Wuhan region of Hubei (December 1852–February 1853). The rebels then sailed eastward along the Yangtze in a vast armada, passing through Jiujiang and Anqing on their way to the old Ming capital of Nanjing. The Taipings captured the historic city in March 1853 and renamed it as the Heavenly Capital (Tianjing).[9] Hong and other Taiping leaders resided there until the collapse of their rebellion in 1864.

Hong's repeated failure in the examinations and his subsequent visions (whether real or constructed) reflect not his intellectual deficiencies, but the competitiveness of the late imperial examination system. In Hong's native province of Guangdong, the pass rate for the provincial examinations had fallen from 2.8% in 1558 to 1.5% in 1794 and 1% in 1844. The cause of this gradual drop was a rigid pass quota. Although the number of candidates had increased over time (2700 in 1558, 4600 in 1794, and 7500 in 1844), the pass quota for the examinations remained practically unchanged (75 graduates in 1558, 71 in 1794, and only 72 in 1844). Such inflexibility, which is also evident in figures for Zhejiang, Shandong, Fujian, Shaanxi, and Sichuan, highlights one of the fundamental social problems of late imperial China.[10] Although the population of China (and thus the number of examination candidates) had rapidly expanded during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the Qing imperial bureaucracy failed to adapt to those demographic changes by increasing the number of academic degrees and government posts that it offered.[11] This inability to absorb literati talent meant that the examination system was producing an unprecedentedly large number of educated and unemployed (at least in an official capacity) men during the late Qing period. Many of those men patiently responded to failure by returning to their studies (sometimes after an interval for reflection or work) and waiting for another opportunity to take the examination.[12] Dedication and perseverance of this sort may have been possible for many of the examination failures, but it was

almost inevitable that one of those frustrated scholars would come forward at some point and challenge the system that had denied him the glory for which he had studied his whole life.

At the heart of the Taipings' religious and political order were the visions that Hong had experienced in 1837. Between 1843 and 1848, Hong—in response to his reading of Liang's *Good Words* and the Chinese Bible—converted those raw visions into a coherent and meticulously recorded divine revelation. The foundation of this new revelation was Hong's claim that he had ascended to heaven in 1837. The earliest publication to mention Hong's ascension was his *Ode on the Origin of the Way and the Saving of the World* (*Yuandao jiushi ge*; 1845), in which he asserted, "My soul has previously been allowed to ascend to heaven. My words are true and real, without the slightest extravagance."[13] This extract confirms that Hong was talking about his ascension, and using the event to enhance the credibility of his message, as early as 1845. The extract also suggests that Hong saw his ascension as a *spiritual* phenomenon, as he explicitly stated that his "soul" (*hun*), rather than his corporeal body, had ascended to heaven.[14] The *Ode on the Origin of the Way* does not, however, tell us anything of detail about the ascension itself—what exactly happened, when it happened, and *why* it happened. Such information came three years later when Hong and his cousin Hong Rengan wrote the *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle* (*Taiping tianri*; 1862 [written 1848]), a quasi-biographical work that offers a detailed account of Hong's experiences in heaven.

According to Hong's report, numerous angels descended into the world in 1837 and escorted him up to heaven.[15] Following his arrival, Hong met the Heavenly Father (Tianfu) and the Heavenly Elder Brother (Tianxiong), Jesus Christ. The Heavenly Father personally conversed with Hong, handed him a seal and a sword, and charged him with a mission to expel evil demons from heaven. As the *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle* explained,

> At this time the Heavenly Father, the Supreme Lord and Great Shangdi, commanded the Lord to do battle with the demons and drive them out. He gave him a golden seal and a sword and ordered him, with the host of angels, to drive out the demons.[16]

After Hong had completed this task, the Heavenly Father ordered him to descend to earth and destroy the demons of the world. In sending Hong into the world, God reassured him of his constant support:

> Do not be afraid. Take courage and act. Whenever you are beset by difficulties, I shall take charge. If they come at you from the left, I shall repel them on the left. If they come at you from the right, I shall repel them on the right.[17]

Hong thus learned from his ascension that the Heavenly Father had chosen him for a special divine mission and would directly assist him in his battles against the demons on earth. The ascension narrative confirmed, in short, that God was intervening in history through and with Hong.

Hong's ascension to heaven in 1837 revealed not only his divinely ordained mission to slay demons, but also his unique identity as the Heavenly King (Tianwang) and second son of God. According to the *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle*, God granted Hong the official title of Heavenly King following the expulsion of the demons from heaven: "The Heavenly Father, the Supreme Lord and Great Shangdi, was most delighted and conferred on the Lord the title 'Taiping Heavenly King, Monarch of the Great Way, [Hong Xiu-] quan.'"[18] The *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle* also implied that Hong was the second son of God by calling Jesus the Heavenly *Elder* Brother and referring to Hong as his "natural younger brother" (*baodi*).[19] Hong informed his closest relatives of this newfound spiritual status following his return to earth. In meeting his earthly father and elder brothers, Hong boldly stated that he was "sent by Heaven as the true ordained Son of Heaven to exterminate the evil and preserve the upright."[20] Hong again emphasized that he was the Son of Heaven (Tianzi) during a conversation with his elder sister: "The Lord said, 'Elder sister, I am the Taiping Son of Heaven.' With his hand he wrote the four characters *Tai-ping Tian-zi* for his elder sister to see."[21] These recorded statements show that Hong used his visions to construct a new spiritual identity for himself as the Heavenly King and second son of God (or Heaven). Significantly, the titles that Hong chose for himself (in particular, Tianzi) suggested that he was a religious leader who could also become a political ruler in the future.

The Problem: China's Departure from the "Great Path" of God

Hong and his followers believed that they were on a spiritual mission to save China, but they did not believe that they were introducing an alien and historically unknown God to the Chinese people. The basic belief of

their salvation narrative was, in fact, that the Chinese people had once known God. The problem, according to Hong, was that the people of ancient China fell into error and gradually lost their consciousness of the Heavenly Father Shangdi. The Taipings thus presented their religious mission as a spiritual restoration: they were not establishing a new system of truth, but were *reviving* the beliefs of ancient China.

The idea that the ancient Chinese people had recognized and worshipped God can be found in several of the Taipings' religious publications. The *Three Character Classic* (*Sanzi jing*; 1853), a book used by the Taipings to educate and instruct children, declared, "The Chinese in early ages were looked after by God. Together with foreign countries they walked in one way. From the time of Pangu down to the Three Dynasties, they revered Shangdi, as history records."[22] As this extract shows, the Taipings believed that the Chinese people had worshipped Shangdi from the creation of humankind (the Taipings saw Pangu as a symbol of the earliest generation in Chinese history, and not as the creator of the world) to the end of the Three Dynasties period (c. 2070–256 BCE).[23] This positive assessment of ancient Chinese culture first appeared in Hong's early religious writings from the period of 1844–47. His *Ode on the Origin of the Way*, for example, declared that the worship of Shangdi was a universal phenomenon in ancient China: "From the time of Pangu down to the Three Dynasties, sovereigns and subjects as one body revered August Heaven. During that time when the kings honored Shangdi, nobles, scholars, and commoners all did the same."[24] The Taipings thus idealized the period of the Three Dynasties as the high point in Chinese religious history. In that uncorrupted ancient world, every class of Chinese society—from kings and scholars to the common people—honored and worshipped Shangdi.[25]

One of the reasons for emphasizing the ancient roots of Chinese belief in Shangdi was to counter the popular criticism that Christianity was a foreign and culturally un-Chinese religion. That discursive motive can be identified in the *Book of Heavenly Commandments* (*Tiantiao shu*; 1852), which pointed to the veneration of Shangdi in ancient China to contradict the claim that worshippers of God were "following foreign ways" (*cong fan*). The foreign *appearance* of Christianity was due to the fact that the various countries of the West had continuously embraced the "great path" (*dalu*) of God, while China had departed from the true Way and followed the "demonic path" (*guilu*) for approximately two thousand years.[26] These ideas confirmed that the Taipings were not promoting a completely

foreign and heterodox belief system through which they would overthrow the "natural" culture of China. Rather, they suggested that the Taipings were returning the Chinese people to the ancient, indigenous, and orthodox beliefs that they had gradually forgotten over time. The adoption of this restorationist perspective legitimized the Taipings culturally, allowing them to attack certain symbols of the indigenous religious world without appearing to be enemies of Chinese culture. Taiping restorationism was, in other words, a discourse of cultural convergence that served the same basic purpose as that of Ricci: namely, to prove that they were the guardians, and not the opponents, of *the* orthodox culture of China. Of course, they—like Ricci—decided what that orthodox culture was.

In explaining China's departure from the true Way of God, the Taipings claimed that the Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE) was the critical period when Chinese people started to abandon Shangdi and follow the demonic path. As the *Three Character Classic* put it, "Coming to Zheng of Qin, he was infatuated with the immortals. All were deluded by the demons, those two thousand years."[27] This spiritual judgment was based on Hong's earlier assessment of the first Qin emperor Zheng (Qin Shi Huang, r. 221–210 BCE) in his *Exhortation on the Origin of the Way and the Enlightening of the Age* (*Yuandao jueshi xun*; 1845–47 [hereafter *Second Exhortation*]).[28] In that early religious text, Hong complained, "When Zheng of Qin arose, he first introduced the calamitous belief in immortals and strange things … and in the extremity of his mad perverseness sent men out onto the seas to search for the immortals."[29] Qin Shi Huang's great religious crime was, according to these extracts, his rejection of God and active belief in Daoist "immortals" (*shenxian*). Other key contributors to China's spiritual decline were Ming of Han (r. 58–75) and Song Huizong (r. 1100–26), who had introduced "Buddhist teachings" (*Fofa*) and changed the name of God to the Daoist Jade Emperor (Yuhuang Dadi) respectively.[30] Such statements about the misdeeds of previous emperors reveal that the Taipings identified Daoism and Buddhism as the traditions most culpable for the Chinese people's ignorance of Shangdi. Following the emergence of those belief systems during the Qin and Han dynasties (221 BCE–220 CE), demonic delusions in China gradually increased until "everyone forgot the grace and virtue of the Heavenly Father."[31]

Although there is no evidence to suggest that Hong was influenced by the Jesuits, the writings of Yang Tingyun (1562–1627), one of their high-profile converts, confirm that Hong employed a well-known historical framework (rooted in Zhu Xi's [1130–1200] discourse on the

"transmission of the Way," *daotong*) to explain the spiritual decline of China.[32] According to Yang, the true Way prevailed in China during the Three Dynasties, when the veneration of Heaven was at its peak. However, it declined during the Qin and Han dynasties due to the appearance of heterodox teachings in the form of Daoism and Buddhism. The heavenly doctrines remained dark and unclear for 1600 years until Matteo Ricci came to China to clarify the true and original basis of the Way.[33] These ideas, which were articulated over two centuries before Hong's conversion to Christianity, show that Yang and Hong used similar historical narratives to convey the indigenous roots and orthodox nature of their new Christian beliefs. Both idealized the ancient period of the Three Dynasties and blamed the emergence of Daoism and Buddhism during the Qin and Han dynasties for the spiritual degeneration of China. Significantly, the evidence suggests that the historical discourses of both individuals were rooted in the terminological choices of missionaries and their Chinese assistants.

The observation of China's historical shift from ancient belief to ignorance—the foundation of the Taipings' vision of world salvation—was inspired by the translated name of God in the Chinese Christian literature. In Liang's *Good Words*, the title Shentian Shangdi ("God of Heaven Shangdi") was one of the most frequently used designations for the Christian deity. The Gützlaff Bible, which the Taipings adopted as their official translation of the scriptures, also used the term Shangdi as the Chinese name for God.[34] Following the terminology of those two books (and especially that of *Good Words* before 1847), Hong referred to God as the Heavenly Father Shangdi (Tianfu Shangdi) in his early religious writings. Later works introduced extended forms of the title (such as Tianfu Shangzhu Huang Shangdi, "Heavenly Father, the Supreme Lord and Great Shangdi"), but almost all of the references to God in Taiping publications included the core title Shangdi that Hong had acquired from the Chinese Christian literature.[35]

The Taipings' official documents suggest that their soteriological problem (the Chinese people's ignorance of their *once-known* God) developed as Hong applied the translated name of God to the Chinese classics. In his *Second Exhortation*, for example, Hong explained that the Chinese classics contained a record of ancient belief in Shangdi: "*On examining China's historical records*, we find that from the time of Pangu down to the Three Dynasties sovereigns and subjects as one body reverently worshipped the Great Shangdi [emphasis added]."[36] The overlap between the biblical and

classical concepts of God was also explicitly discussed by the Taipings in the *Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature* (*Tianqing daoli shu*; 1854), which quoted references to Shangdi from the *Book of History* (*Shujing*), the *Book of Poetry* (*Shijing*), and the *Mencius* (*Mengzi*) to confirm that there was only the "true Way" (*zhendao*) in the world of the ancients.[37] These extracts from official publications indicate that the translated name of God was central to the development of the Taipings' theory of spiritual decline in China. By nominally connecting the Christian God to the deity of the classics, the title Shangdi encouraged the Taipings—and the classically trained Hong in particular—to believe that the Chinese people had forgotten their ancient God.

Essentialist analyses might point to the "madness" of Hong as the starting point of the Taipings' "heterodox" vision of world salvation, but Taiping publications indicate that the roots of their localized soteriology lay in the terminology of the Chinese Christian literature. Significantly, the missionaries who translated the Bible realized that the title Shangdi would lead many Chinese people to associate the Christian God with the classical deity. Some of the missionaries even seemed to endorse such associations. For example, Walter Medhurst's *Important Discourses on Heavenly Principles* (*Tianli yaolun*)—a text that Hong read, edited, and published as an official Taiping book—commented, "When the *Book of History* says that 'Shangdi is great,' that 'the Great Shangdi has conferred on the people a moral sense,' and that we should 'serve Shangdi with reverence,' the idea is correct."[38] These favorable comments on classical references to God suggest that Medhurst and the other Protestant Bible translators intentionally adopted the Chinese term Shangdi—like Ricci before them—to emphasize the overlap between the Christian God and the classical deity of China. The Taipings' basic soteriological belief thus represents not an illogical inference by an unguided convert, but the development and conclusion of earlier attempts to connect Christianity and the classics through the concept of Shangdi.

The Source: The "Serpent Devil" and His "Demonic Followers" on Earth

The Taipings believed that the Chinese people had completely forgotten their ancient God Shangdi. Turning to the question of causation, they declared that the sources of spiritual ignorance in China were "demons" (*mogui*, *yaomo*) that had deluded the minds and captured the souls of the

people. Just as the Taipings' soteriological problem was inspired by the title Shangdi, so too their ideas on its demonic origins were shaped by themes from the Chinese Christian literature.

The Taipings' belief that demons had deluded the Chinese people since antiquity was expressed most clearly by Wang Baobang: "Alas, while at the time of the Three Dynasties demons were extinct, after the Three Dynasties demons suddenly arose. They invented perverse theories to delude the world, and they established heresies to captivate people's souls."[39] A demon, as understood by Hong and his followers, was an evil being or object that helped to suppress the people's awareness of their Heavenly Father Shangdi. The Taipings, in their official publications, identified religious "idols" (*ouxiang*) as the group of demons that had carried out that function most effectively. In his *Second Exhortation*, Hong claimed that the various idols that the Chinese people worshipped were "all demonic followers and devilish servants of the square-headed and red-eyed Serpent Devil, the Demon of Hades."[40] Similarly, Yang Xiuqing and Xiao Chaogui (d. 1852) declared in a later work that the "idols of bodhisattvas" (*pusa ouxiang*) were "demonic followers and devilish servants" (*yaotu guizu*) of the Demon of Hades (Yanluoyao). Yang and Xiao also emphasized that this Demon of Hades—the ruler of hell in Buddhism and Chinese popular religion—was synonymous with the "old serpent" (*laoshe*) from the biblical creation narrative.[41] Religious (and especially Buddhist) idols were, in other words, key instruments or manifestations of the corrupting evil force that had sought to tempt humankind away from the Heavenly Father since the creation of the world. Those agents or expressions of the Serpent Devil (Shemo) were, together with the "false gods" of Daoism (immortals, Jade Emperor) and Chinese mythology, collectively responsible for China's spiritual decline.

The quality that united the various demons of China was their effort to usurp the position of God. In one of his early religious writings, Hong criticized the "heretics" (*guairen*) who claimed that "the Demon of Hades determines the period of life and death."[42] He also condemned those who superstitiously believed that "the Dragon Demon of the Eastern Sea produces rain."[43] Besides claiming God's identity as the regulator of life and natural forces, the demons were guilty of taking the credit for his protection of humankind. On this particular crime against God, Hong asserted that the Chinese people had falsely ascribed the Heavenly Father's protective grace to the idols of Buddhism. As he explained in his *Second Exhortation*,

> While it is clearly evident that the Great Shangdi protects all people, you mortals still set up your idols and pray to them for protection, food, and clothing, saying, "Our bodhisattva is responsive." It is clearly the grace of the Great Shangdi, but you mistakenly believe it is the grace of evil demons.[44]

This passage expresses Hong's core belief that Buddhist idols had blasphemously assumed the position of God in China. Those idols not only offered the Chinese people an alternative set of deities to worship, but also took the credit for Shangdi's grace in protecting the people of the world. Thus believing that the idols of Buddhism were demonic usurpers, Hong asserted that "they ought to be exterminated."[45] This judgment underlay the many iconoclastic attacks that Hong and his followers later inflicted on the idols of China.

The identification of Buddhist idols and popular gods as the demonic sources of ignorance was the result of Hong's applying themes from the Chinese Christian literature to the cultural environment of China.[46] The Christian books that Hong read categorically condemned idolatry as a major cause of spiritual ignorance in the world. Liang's *Good Words*, for example, asserted that "demons" (*mogui*) had deluded the Chinese people and forced them to reject the Great Lord (Dazhu) in favor of man-made idols.[47] Liang, like Hong, picked out the idols of Daoism and Buddhism as the principal sources of spiritual ignorance in China. In his discussion of Daoism, Liang claimed that the school was "deluded in the path of the immortals," choosing to worship idols of the Three Pure Ones (Sanqing) and the Three Primes (Sanyuan) instead of the one true God.[48] Liang also denounced the popular deities of Buddhism (including Guanyin), asserting that all blessings came from God and not the Buddhist idols that falsely claimed the merit for his grace. As Liang put it,

> Blessings and good fortune are bestowed by him [the God of Heaven Shangdi]. Disasters and difficulties are also sent down by the God of Heaven Shangdi. The man-made idols of gods, Buddhas, and bodhisattvas can neither bestow good luck and blessings nor send down misfortune and disasters.[49]

The overlap between these ideas and Hong's claims about idols (especially Buddhist idols) usurping the position of God suggests that Liang's *Good Words* originally encouraged him to view idolatry as the root cause of the Chinese people's ignorance of Shangdi.

Liang's *Good Words* was the original source of inspiration for Hong's hostility toward idols and popular gods, but the Chinese Bible also appears

to have shaped and reinforced his opposition to idolatry. As Liang's book did not explicitly list the Ten Commandments and explain their ethical implications, Hong's realization that idol worship violated divine law must have stemmed from his reading of the scriptures before or during his stay with Roberts in 1847.[50] The *Second Exhortation* confirms that he was aware of the Decalogue's condemnation of idolatry by 1847 at the latest. In discussing the various idols that the Chinese people worshipped, Hong pointed to the second commandment to show that they were man-made objects that existed in opposition to the expressed will of God:

> The Great Shangdi personally commanded Moses, saying, "I am the Supreme Lord, the Great Shangdi. You people of the world must on no account set up idols resembling anything in heaven above or on earth below, and kneel down and worship them." Now you people of the world who set up idols and kneel down and worship them are in absolute defiance of the Great Shangdi's expressed will.[51]

Hong's belief that the worship of idols defied the will of God was also inspired by the exclusive religious rhetoric of the biblical Psalms. Hong confirmed the influence of Psalm 115, with its memorable attack on idolatry, in his *Second Exhortation*. In that early text, Hong criticized those people who rejected the Heavenly Father and worshipped "stupid objects" (*chunwu*) that "have mouths but cannot speak, noses but cannot smell, ears but cannot hear, hands but cannot grasp, and feet but cannot walk."[52] Like the description of God's commanding Moses on Mount Sinai, this reference to a specific passage from the Psalms shows that the biblical text was just as important as *Good Words* in shaping Hong's ideas about the idolatrous origins of Chinese spiritual ignorance.

While it is possible that Hong encountered (and realized the soteriological implications of) the second commandment and Psalm 115 independently, the reports of Issachar Roberts suggest that he was informed about the Bible's denunciation of idolatry during his two-month stay at Guangzhou in 1847. One of Roberts' early reports praised the Taipings for "really upsetting idolatry" and thereby "opening the way for the universal spread of the gospel among them."[53] Roberts also described Hong as an individual who "presents the true God for their adoration, and casts down idols with a mighty hand."[54] According to Roberts, that uncompromising attack on idolatry proved that Hong's rebellion was "going on under the wisdom and guidance of the deep counsels of Almighty God,

and [was] designed by Him to bring about His own purposes and glory in the renovation and salvation of this numerous people."[55] The celebratory tone of these comments reveals that Hong's condemnation of Buddhist idols and popular gods was consistent with, and possibly influenced by, Roberts' beliefs about the state of religion in China. Thus, Protestant missionaries may have contributed both directly (as instructors) and indirectly (as translators of Old Testament books) to the Taipings' belief that idols and false gods were the cause of China's great spiritual decline.

The Taipings identified idols and popular gods as the principal demons behind the Chinese people's ignorance of Shangdi. This theme, as the analysis above has shown, was at the heart of Hong's earliest writings (in particular, the *Second Exhortation*) from 1844–47. Hong and his followers did not, however, restrict the label "demon" to religious objects. They also politicized the source of their soteriological problem by claiming that the ruling Manchus had contributed to the delusions of the Chinese people. Although Hong's *Second Exhortation* (1845–47) implied that the Chinese emperor (the general office of *huangdi*) had usurped God's unique position and title as Di, it did not explicitly mention the Qing dynasty or the Manchu ethnic group.[56] Various books that were published after the formal declaration of rebellion in 1851 carried, by contrast, a clear and coherent anti-Manchu message. This gradual development in the Taipings' revolutionary discourse is not, however, a sign that the situation of the peasants/Hakkas at Guangxi compelled Hong to *replace* his original (and "apolitical") religious message with a political ideology that would suit their needs. This simplistic view of Hong's ideological development overlooks the important ways in which the condemnation and call for the destruction of the Manchus *extended* the restorationist worldview that he had created in his earliest texts.[57]

Several official books that were published after the declaration of rebellion show that the Manchus had been absorbed into Hong's early discourse of religious decline. The Manchus, according to those texts, had not only imposed their hairstyle, clothing, customs, language, and laws onto the Chinese people, but had also *intensified* the people's ignorance of Shangdi by promoting the worship of idols and false gods. As the *Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature*—a book that was commissioned by Yang Xiuqing and published in 1854—explained, "After the demon barbarians [*yaohu*] seized and occupied China, they induced the people to believe in demons *even more profoundly* [emphasis added]."[58] In a separate publication from 1852, Yang and Xiao Chaogui proclaimed that the

ruling emperor Xianfeng (r. 1850–61) was a "Manchu demon" (*Manyao*) who had "induced humankind to transform into demons, worship false gods [*xieshen*], disobey the true God, and greatly rebel against the Great Shangdi."[59] Yang and Xiao also discussed the Manchus' religious crimes in a proclamation that was issued a few months after the taking of Nanjing in 1853:

> Ever since the barbarian slaves [*hunu*] threw China into confusion, they have induced the people to worship false gods and abandon the true God, rebelling against Shangdi. They have led the people to transform into demons and divest themselves of their human form, thus provoking August Heaven.[60]

According to these and other official publications, the Manchus' rejection of Shangdi and continued belief in false gods (in particular, Buddhas and classical sages) confirmed that they were demon followers who sought to deepen the Chinese people's ignorance of God.[61] The elimination of the Manchus was, therefore, a vital part of the Taipings' wider spiritual mission to eradicate idolatry and restore the worship of Shangdi in China.

A question that historians of modern China may be asking themselves at this stage is: would the Taipings have been less critical of the Qing had it been an ethnically Chinese (rather than Manchu) dynasty? Can ethnic differences, in other words, explain the strength of the Taipings' hostility toward the Qing? The answer to both of these questions is categorically no. Although there was an ethnic dimension to some of the Taipings' attacks on the Manchus (for example, their claim that the Manchu people were descendants of a fox and a dog), their books clearly stated that the principal crimes of the ruling dynasty were *religious* in nature: namely, its rejection of Shangdi and worship of false gods.[62] The primacy of this religious justification for hostility over any ethnically motivated accusations is confirmed by the Taipings' condemnation of particular emperors from China's great historical (and ethnically Chinese) dynasties. Qin Shi Huang, the emperor who unified China in 221 BCE, was criticized by Hong for his worship of Daoist immortals. The Taipings likewise attacked Ming of Han and Song Huizong for their association with Buddhism and Daoism respectively. Finally, Hong emphasized the shared culpability of Chinese and Manchu rulers of the past in his *Second Exhortation*, which implicitly denounced the ruling emperor (and, by extension, all previous users of the title *huangdi*) for usurping the title of God (Di).[63] Thus, the

Manchu emperors were a problem for China not because they were ethnically non-Chinese, but because they—like Chinese rulers before them—rejected Shangdi, usurped his title, and worshipped false gods. This explanation, which is rooted in official Taiping documents, shows that we cannot simply classify the Taipings' hostility toward the Manchus as an expression of modern Han nationalism. The Taipings' primary goal was to save the Chinese people from a dynasty that promoted idolatry and ignorance of God. Ethnic arguments were a convenient appendage whose purpose was to reinforce the people's perception of the Qing's God-forsaken nature.

The Solution: Hong's Mission to "Destroy the Demons" and "Save the People"

The Taipings proclaimed that the Chinese people were in the midst of a soteriological crisis. From the period of the Qin dynasty onward, demons—in the form of Buddhist idols, Daoist immortals, and the "false gods" of popular religion—had deluded the Chinese people and suppressed their awareness of the Heavenly Father Shangdi. Hong's response to that soteriological problem was to declare that God had sent him into the world to slay all evil demons, preserve his faithful followers, and restore the ancient Chinese worship of Shangdi. While some interpreters have used these ideas (in particular, the extermination of demons) to demonstrate the "unchristian" character of the Taipings, a closer analysis reveals that each aspect of Hong's God-given mission to save China stemmed from his interpretation of themes in the translated biblical text.

The Taipings' religious publications outlined a doctrine of atonement that many of the Protestant missionaries in China would have accepted as correct. God, they explained, "could not bear it in his heart" to annihilate humankind for their sins against divine law, but pardoning humankind without punishment would have been "inconsonant with righteousness."[64] Amid this moral dilemma, God elected to send his own son into the world to pay the penalty for human sin. In the *Taiping Songs on World Salvation* (*Taiping jiushi ge*; 1853), Yang Xiuqing claimed that God "especially sent his first-born son, the Heavenly Elder Brother Jesus, down to earth to save the world and suffer extreme misery and grief in order to redeem humankind's sins."[65] Other Taiping books stated that Jesus "willingly sacrificed his life" (*yuan juanming*), that the result of his voluntary self-sacrifice was the "cleansing of all sins" (*jing zhu zui*), and that all people who relied on

him would ultimately ascend to heaven.[66] These soteriological statements suggest that the Taipings retained many of the Protestant missionaries' core ideas about Jesus: his sacrifice was voluntary, substitutionary (he suffered and died *on behalf of* humankind), and universally efficacious.[67] However, the Taipings deviated from the missionaries on one key point. Although they declared that Jesus' sacrifice was universally effective in redeeming sins, they believed that since antiquity demons had deluded the Chinese people and prevented them from accepting God and his offer of forgiveness in Jesus. The implication of this belief was that another divine intervention was required to redeem the seemingly irredeemable land of China.[68]

The task of destroying the demonic forces in China fell to the Heavenly King and second son of God, Hong Xiuquan. The *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle*, as we saw in the first part of this chapter, explained in detail the mission that the Heavenly Father gave to Hong following his ascension to heaven in 1837. Several books that were published after 1851 repeated the main themes from the *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle* in discussing the purpose of Hong's God-given mission. Yang Xiuqing and Xiao Chaogui, for example, offered a clear summary of his mission in the *Proclamations by Imperial Sanction* (*Banxing zhaoshu*; 1852):

> The Heavenly Father, the Supreme Lord and Great Shangdi, compassionate toward the people of the world who have fallen victim to the demons' poisonous schemes, in the *dingyou* year [1837] sent angels to escort the Heavenly King up to heaven. Shangdi personally ordered the Heavenly King to destroy the demons, and afterward sent the Heavenly King down into the world to become the Lord and save the people.[69]

This extract clearly depicts Hong as the divinely ordained solution to China's historical problem of spiritual ignorance. Hong's task, as the Taiping court historian Huang Zaixing further explained, was to go down into the world and "exterminate the demons" (*zhumie yaomo*) that were suppressing the people's consciousness of God.[70] The logical outcome of this demon-slaying mission was that the Chinese people, liberated from their delusions, would finally become aware of the Heavenly Father and the gracious gift of forgiveness that he had offered to the world through Jesus.

Hong performed his divinely ordained role as demon slayer and restorer of God-consciousness by attacking all of the Buddhist, Daoist, and popular religious idols that he encountered. Those iconoclastic attacks are clearly

recorded in the *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle*, which describes how Hong, during his early religious tours, entered local temples in Guangxi and attacked (both verbally and physically) the resident demons.[71] The most detailed report explains that Hong and four associates went to Xiangzhou in 1847 to destroy the temple of an idol named King Gan (Ganwang).[72] On entering the temple, Hong struck King Gan with a large bamboo stick and rebuked him, saying, "How do you have the face to assume responsibility for the great works of the Heavenly Father, the Supreme Lord and Great Shangdi, and brazenly receive the acknowledgment and worship of people?"[73] Hong thus believed that King Gan, like the Buddhist idols and all other demons in China, was guilty of usurping the position of God. To restore the honor of the Heavenly Father, Hong instructed his four associates to disfigure the idol: "He ordered the four men to dig out the eyes of the demon, cut off its beard, trample its hat, tear its embroidered dragon gown to shreds, turn its body upside down, and break off its arms."[74] In mutilating King Gan and other locally revered idols, Hong and his followers were offering symbolic demonstrations of their and their newfound God's power. The disfigured objects not only underlined Hong's core religious mission, but also suggested that resistance to the will of God would result in one's physical destruction.[75] Many local people would have opposed the iconoclastic attacks as an assault on their traditional culture, but others would have seen in them proof that the supposedly efficacious idols were incapable of protecting themselves and their worshippers.

The reports of missionaries provide further information on the iconoclastic campaigns that Hong and his followers unleashed on the temples and idols of China. Alexander Wylie (1815–87) conveyed the extensiveness of the Taipings' attacks on idolatry when he reported that there was "not a single temple for idol worship to be seen anywhere within their reach."[76] Other reports discussed the specific idols that the Taipings targeted for destruction. Confirming that the Taipings regarded Buddhism and Daoism as the traditions most culpable for China's spiritual decline, a former rebel informed Walter Medhurst that "every thing belonging to Buddha and Taou, were indiscriminately destroyed: the temples and images were smashed all to pieces."[77] In a similar report that confirms the descriptions of idol mutilation in the *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle*, Griffith John (1831–1912) explained,

> In other temples the idols are simply mutilated or destroyed, without being removed. It is common to see the nose, chin, and hands cut off. The floors of these buildings are bestrewn with relics of helpless gods, Buddhist and

> Tauist, male and female. Some are cast into the canals, and are found floating down the stream mingled with the débris of rifled houses and the remains of the dead.[78]

Josiah Cox (1828–1906) also offered a detailed account of the Taipings' idol-smashing activities at Ningbo:

> In the temples we entered, the destruction of idols has been unsparing. The god of war and his satillites [*sic*] lay in scattered fragments about their former shrines.... Others stood with bruised eyes and mouths, and ears and noses missing. Some lay about in dismembered heaps.[79]

The Taipings, as we can see from the above extracts, were determined to eliminate all of the idols that had contributed to the spiritual ignorance of the Chinese people historically. The disfigured idols that lay on temple floors and floated in canals reminded Hong's followers of that core religious mission and gave skeptics and Qing loyalists a powerful sign of the demons' helplessness in the face of God's anger and attacks.

Besides destroying the temples and idols of "false gods," Hong believed that overthrowing the Manchus—the intensifiers of the Chinese people's spiritual ignorance—was a requirement of his mission to restore the worship of Shangdi in China. In his *Second Exhortation*, Hong implied that the Chinese emperor, as a usurper of the divine title Di, was destined to suffer eternal punishment in hell.[80] Later (post-1851) publications not only became more explicit in their condemnation of the ruling emperor, but also communicated God's will to destroy the idol-worshipping Manchus as a whole. In an essay compilation that commemorated the establishment of the Heavenly Capital (Tianjing) in 1853, the contributor Liu Shengpei declared that the Heavenly Father had "ordered our Heavenly King to wipe out the barbarian demons and rebuild the world."[81] Taiping writers also communicated God's wish to see the Manchus annihilated by portraying the victories of the Heavenly Army (Tianbing) over Qing "demons" as preordained, divinely inspired successes.[82] Xia Zhongying's essay in the abovementioned compilation, for example, claimed,

> Since the righteous uprising in Guangxi, the power of Heaven has been greatly displayed, all battles being victorious and all attacks being successful. From the three Chu to Jiangnan, the demons have been exterminated and the people saved.[83]

This extract suggested that the Taipings' victories over Qing forces were the work of God, who was intervening in history through Hong to liberate his chosen people from the clutches of evil demons, both religious and political.

The Taipings' belief that God was guiding them to victory probably stemmed from military experiences during the early phase of their rebellion at Guangxi. Between March 1851 and April 1852, the Taipings broke through surrounding enemy lines on five separate occasions. Perhaps the most inspiring of those escapes was the breakout from Yong'an (present-day Mengshan) in April 1852. Imperial forces built a wall around Yong'an, which the Taipings had occupied since September 1851, in the early part of 1852. The Taipings started to experience shortages of food and ammunition, so on April 5, at midnight, they stealthily escaped on the east side of the city where the imperial garrison was weakest. They then pushed on to Longliao Peak and entered the Dadong Mountains.[84] This great escape was interpreted—and later remembered—by the Taipings as a miraculous sign that God was leading them to victory. The Northern King Wei Changhui (d. 1856), during a conversation with Thomas Taylor Meadows (1815–68; interpreter for HMS *Hermes*) in 1853, repeatedly asserted that "he and his companions in arms had enjoyed the special protection and aid of God, without which they could never have been able to do what they had done against superior numbers and resources."[85] An elderly man also told Meadows that when the Taipings were outnumbered and short of supplies at Yong'an, the Heavenly Father "came down and showed us the way to break out." This divine intervention enabled the beleaguered Taipings—like the biblical Israelites before them—to find a safe passage and "completely beat" their enemies.[86]

Biblical Inspiration for Hong's Demon-slaying Mission

Demons, as we saw in the previous chapter, were a dominant feature of religious life in China, with Daoist priests, Buddhist monks, local shamans, and other spiritual experts offering rituals to protect individuals and communities from their disruptive influence. The ability to subdue demons was, in fact, one of the oldest and most widely acknowledged markers of spiritual power in China. According to Daoist hagiographical accounts, Zhang Daoling, who founded the Way of the Heavenly Masters (Tianshi dao) in the mid-second century, used magical powers to destroy

the Eight Demon Marshals and their demonic followers.[87] Similarly, religious revolutionaries from Chinese history have often depicted their missions as battles against demonic forces. In one classic case, the Buddhist monk Faqing (leader of the Mahāyāna Rebellion of 515) declared that the Buddha Maitreya would arrive in the near future to "eradicate the old demons." Those demons included the clerical and political establishment and all other enemies of his sect.[88] Faqing's image of Maitreya is strikingly similar to that of Hong in official Taiping documents, the son of God simply replacing the future Buddha as the appointed slayer of demons.[89] Such thematic overlaps confirm that Hong's mission drew Christianity into a local religious world in which the restoration of order—whether spiritual, social, or political—often involved the elimination of demonic forces. Significantly, the inspiration for the Taipings' localized solution to China's soteriological crisis (namely, the Heaven-sent demon slayer) can be found in the Chinese Christian literature, which provided models and themes that encouraged Hong to draw on indigenous religious symbolism in articulating his divinely ordained mission.

The apocalyptic imagery of Revelation 12 appears to have shaped (or at least reinforced) Hong's ideas about his God-given mission to slay demons. In that chapter, John (the recipient of God's revelation) explains that he saw a great red dragon in heaven, and that it hoped to devour the unborn child of a woman clothed with the sun. The child, however, was taken to God following its birth. Michael and his angels then fought against the dragon ("that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan"; Revelation 12:9) in heaven.[90] In his annotations to the New Testament, Hong suggested that this biblical narrative was a prophecy of his own divine mission:

> I still remember that when I entered the fetus of this woman, the Father made a sign, which was that she should be clothed with the sun, in order to show that the fetus within her body was the sun.... Shangdi had specially dispatched me to be born into the world to exterminate this serpent. Therefore, the serpent wanted to devour me, hoping to assume responsibility for the great works of Shangdi.... The Father and the Elder Brother now have descended into the world, bringing me to be the Lord, especially to exterminate this serpent.[91]

Hong, as we can see from this passage, believed that he was the child of the woman clothed with the sun.[92] His assumption of this apocalyptic identity explains why he referred to himself as the "sun" (*ri*, *taiyang*) in

his annotations and other publications.[93] Hong also connected himself to the text of Revelation 12 by claiming that he—like Michael—had a God-given mission to "exterminate" (*zhumie*) the serpent. Just as Michael and his angels expelled the dragon from heaven and threw it down to earth, so too Hong and a host of angels (as recorded in the *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle*) battled the Demon of Hades, ejected it from heaven, and drove it down into the world.[94] While these ideas do not prove that the imagery of Revelation triggered Hong's belief in his demon-slaying mission, the thematic overlaps and the great length of his notes on the book indicate that the visions and prophecies of John were a significant source of inspiration.[95]

The Book of Revelation may have encouraged Hong to view himself as a demon slayer, but Liang's *Good Words* was the text that first informed him about God's plan to destroy all non-believers and evildoers in the world. In the final chapter of his book, Liang explained that Jesus would return at an unknown time to judge the living and the dead. According to Liang's account of the last judgment, Jesus would firstly separate the "righteous" (*yizhe*) and the "evil" (*ezhe*). After sending the latter to the "everlasting fires" (*yonghuo*), he would raise to eternal life not only the deceased who had previously believed in him, but also the community of living believers on earth.[96] Significantly, Liang emphasized that anyone outside the believing community at the time of Jesus' second coming would be destroyed—there would be no last-minute offer of forgiveness. Jesus, he explained, would use raging flames to "punish *all the people* who have not recognized God the Father and have not believed in and obeyed the true Way of his gospel [emphasis added]."[97] Such eschatological ideas, strategically placed at the end of *Good Words*, told Chinese readers that their newfound God was determined to isolate and destroy all of the evil non-believers in the world. It is thus hardly surprising that Hong—an individual who believed that he was establishing the Kingdom of Heaven on earth (see following sections)—presented himself as a divinely appointed demon slayer with a special commission to "exterminate the evil."

Hong's belief that God had sent him into the world to destroy oppressive demons and liberate his chosen people was inspired not only by the apocalyptic imagery of Revelation and Liang's *Good Words*, but also by specific models of divine intervention in history from the Old Testament. Firstly, the destructive aspect of Hong's mission—the extermination of the demonic forces that were responsible for the Chinese people's ignorance of Shangdi—was heavily influenced by the account of the Great Flood in

Genesis (chapters 6–9).[98] Hong's *Second Exhortation* shows that the Great Flood narrative was at the center of his early thinking about God's relation to the world and humankind. As Hong explained in that text,

> Referring to the foreigners' Old Testament, we find that in the days of Noah, the Great Shangdi, because of the magnitude of the people's disobedience, sent down torrents of rain for forty days and forty nights, the vast waters flowing everywhere, drowning the people of the world.[99]

In discussing the specific causes of God's "first great anger" (*diyici danu*), the *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle* asserted that the people of Noah's era were deluded by demons.[100] Similarly, the *Essay on the Awakening of the Age* (*Xingshi wen*; 1858) claimed that God sent the flood because the people of the world, having been "confused by demons" (*shou yao huo*), "failed to worship the true God and worshipped false gods."[101] These explanations of the Great Flood's causes (demon-inflicted delusion, ignorance of Shangdi, and worship of false gods) are identical to the descriptions of China's spiritual problem in Taiping publications. This overlap suggests that the biblical narrative helped to shape Hong's ideas about the purpose of his divinely ordained mission.[102] The Taipings believed that Hong, following the earlier model of the Great Flood, was sent by God to punish and destroy the demons and their ignorant followers on earth. His mission, in other words, was the latest intervention of a God who periodically entered history to eliminate the evil of the world.

Just as the Great Flood provided Hong with a model of divine punishment, so too the Israelite's deliverance from Egypt (Exodus 13–15) showed him that God had previously entered the temporal world to liberate his chosen people. Numerous Taiping publications described how God, on the occasion of his "second great anger" (*di'erci danu*), "saved the Israelites" (*jiu Yiselie*) from persecution by leading them out of Egypt, parting the Red Sea, and destroying the pursuing army in the water.[103] This theme of God's intervening in history to liberate his chosen people from the persecution of oppressors underlay Hong's belief that the Heavenly Father had chosen him to save the Chinese nation—an ancient people of God—from the delusions of demons. Hong confirmed the thematic link between the Exodus narrative and his own divine mission in his annotations to Genesis 14–15:

> As for the things Heaven does, there must be a previous allusion to them. In the past the Father came down into the world to save the Israelites and bring them out of Egypt, thereby making an allusion to the Father's coming

> down into the world at this time to be responsible for the establishing of the Heavenly Kingdom.[104]

Inspired by the Exodus narrative, Hong believed that God was working through him not only to destroy oppressive demons, but also to save and build a new world for the chosen people of China.[105] His twofold mission to "exterminate the evil and preserve the upright" (*zhan xie liu zheng*) combined, in short, the themes of punishment/destruction and liberation/preservation in Old Testament accounts of divine interventions in the world.[106]

Hong's dualistic soteriological vision was consistent not only with biblical narratives of divine intervention, but also with the classical representation of Shangdi as a source of blessings and disasters. Taiping publications confirm that Hong and other Taiping writers were particularly drawn to the following passage from the *Book of History*: "The ways of Shangdi are not invariable: on the virtuous he sends down [*jiang*] all blessings [*xiang*], and on the evil he sends down [*jiang*] all miseries [*yang*]."[107] The *Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature* quoted the classical passage in full to confirm that the ancient Chinese people had recognized and worshipped God.[108] Hong Rengan also referred to the text in *A Hero's Return to the Truth* (*Yingjie gui zhen*; 1861) to demonstrate that God—and not man-made idols—sent down blessings and disasters on the people of the world.[109] A further reference to the passage can be found in the *Three Character Classic*, one of the books that the Taipings used for the instruction of children. The author of that book incorporated the passage (in condensed form) to suggest that God would preserve the obedient and exterminate the disobedient: "The laws of Heaven make no allowance for sentiment. On the virtuous blessings [*xiang*] descend and on the evil miseries [*yang*] descend. Those who obey Heaven are preserved [*cun*] and those who disobey Heaven perish [*wang*]."[110] The book also emphasized these ideas in its discussion of the Exodus, listing the various miseries that God "sent down" (*jiang*) on the evil in order to protect and preserve the good.[111]

Whereas essentialist interpretations have depicted Hong's crusade as the *antithesis* of Christian ethical values (and thus proof that the inspiration for his rebellion lay outside Christianity), the religious texts of the Taipings confirm that it was an *extension* of the biblical worldview in which God entered history as both punisher and protector. The Exodus, the most frequently cited Old Testament story in the texts of the Taipings, offered an archetypal model

of God's entering the world to liberate his chosen people and punish their oppressors. That biblical narrative, which complemented the classical idea that Shangdi sent "blessings" (*xiang*) on the good and "miseries" (*yang*) on the evil, may have originally provoked Hong's core belief that God would redeem the Chinese people by *exterminating* the evil forces that were responsible for their spiritual decline. Once formulated, that belief had the power to comfort and galvanize a Society of God Worshippers whose members had experienced ethnic conflict, residential displacement, and religious persecution in Guangxi.

The "Collective Enjoyment of Great Peace" on Earth

The anticipated outcome of Hong's divinely ordained mission was the realization of Great Peace (*taiping*) on earth. The Taipings believed that once Hong had completed his mission to destroy the demons and restore the worship of God in China, he and his followers would create a perfect spiritual world in which the blessings of Heaven were universally enjoyed and the people were united as brothers and sisters in God. This Great Peace utopia represents not only another layer of the Taipings' localized soteriology, but also one of the most important examples of Christian-Confucian interaction in their theological worldview.

Before the Taipings could build their new spiritual utopia, they had to complete the destructive work of "eliminating the old" (*chu jiu*).[112] The extermination of all demons in China—from the idols of Buddhism to the ruling Manchus—was the first precondition for the achievement of Great Peace. In a prognostic tone, the *Taiping Songs on World Salvation* declared that the people would soon see "the demons speedily exterminated, the whole world tranquilized, the empire unified, and eternal Great Peace established."[113] Focusing more explicitly on China's political demons (the Manchus), Yang Xiuqing and Xiao Chaogui proclaimed that they were "determined to eliminate the barbarian miasma [*hufen*] and enjoy in union the happiness of Great Peace."[114] In that future state of Great Peace, the Chinese people, no longer under the authority of demons, would collectively return to the worship of their Heavenly Father. Emphasizing this particular aspect of the *taiping* utopia, Hong's *Exhortation on the Origin of the Way and the Awakening of the Age* (*Yuandao xingshi xun*; 1845–46 [hereafter *First Exhortation*]) associated the "collective enjoyment of Great Peace" (*gongxiang taiping*) with the people following the "true Way" (*zhendao*) of God and obeying the Heavenly Commandments.[115] Shen Shiqi, in an essay from one of the published compilations, similarly con-

nected the establishment of Great Peace with the return of *all* people to the "true Way" of God.[116] The Great Peace utopia was, in short, the expected outcome of Hong's divine mission. It was a world in which demons were completely destroyed and all people turned toward God, obeyed his divine laws, and purified their characters in line with his expressed will.

The Taipings believed that the people who lived in the demon-free epoch of Great Peace would not only worship Shangdi, but also recognize their unity and brotherly bond under the universal fatherhood of God. This fraternal spirit, which is often mistaken for a Western-style ideology of equality among historians, was central to the Taipings' conception of the ideal world.[117] It was also one of the most prominent themes in Hong's early religious writings. In his *Ode on the Origin of the Way*, for example, Hong proclaimed, "Under heaven all are brothers [*xiongdi*]. The souls [*linghun*] of all come alike from Heaven."[118] The *Second Exhortation* reiterated this belief that the people of the world were united by a common spiritual origin in God. Hong asserted that although the people of the world came from different physical parents, their souls "all depend on the one original breath of the Great Shangdi for birth and creation."[119] Hong's *First Exhortation* emphasized, furthermore, that the worldwide family of spiritual siblings included both men and women: "In the world there are many men and they are all brothers [*xiongdi*]. In the world there are many women and they are all sisters [*zimei*]."[120] The men and women of the Great Peace utopia would thus embrace a fraternal spirit in which all people, both near and far, were regarded as their brothers and sisters in God. The Taipings' adoption of this attitude explains why they dropped derogatory labels and respectfully addressed missionaries and other non-Chinese visitors—who, unlike the Manchus, worshipped Shangdi—as their "foreign brothers" (*yang xiongdi*, *wai xiongdi*).[121] The justification for excluding the Manchus from this spiritual family was that they were a band of "demons" that had rejected the Heavenly Father (the source of the soul) and deluded his children in China. They were unwilling, in short, to recognize the unity of the world under God.

The Taipings imagined that once the people of the world recognized their unity and spiritual brotherhood in God, their attitude and behavior toward one another would inevitably improve. Harmony (*he*), according to the Taipings' religious writings, was one of the most important social outcomes of the fraternal spirit among God's children. Connecting it to the fatherhood of God (source) and the enjoyment of Great Peace, a poem in Hong's *First Exhortation* declared, "Heaven produces and Heaven nourishes, harmony is

precious. Let each of us be at peace with others, let us enjoy Great Peace."[122] The *Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature* repeated this verse from Hong's poem and, more importantly, outlined the hierarchical system of relationships that would characterize a harmonious world. After stating that "the practice of propriety [*li*] lies chiefly in harmony," the book asserted that "those above" (*shangzhe*) were not allowed to oppress the lowly and small, while "those below" (*xiazhe*) were not allowed to humiliate their elders or usurp the positions of their superiors.[123] This Confucian-inspired notion of harmony in hierarchy also underlay the Taipings' position on gender roles. Although the Taipings recognized that women (like men) were children of God, abolished the institution of footbinding, and allowed women to serve in the military, their claim that "the wife's way lies in the three obediences [to father, husband, and son]" (*qidao zai sancong*) shows that they did not directly challenge the established notion of women's subordination to men.[124] The Taipings' concept of harmony, as the above extracts confirm, implied not the overthrow of status hierarchies and their replacement by an egalitarian social system. Rather, harmony—in accordance with Confucian views of social relationships—was a state in which each person acknowledged their position within society and performed the duties of their station with respect and compassion for the brothers and sisters above and below them.[125] What separated the *taiping* utopia from life under the Qing was that superiors, aware of human brotherhood in God, would no longer use their positions to oppress the lower-status members of society. High and low would now coexist in a state of perfect equilibrium.

Another distinguishing feature of the Great Peace utopia was that the children of God would sympathize with, care for, and protect one another on earth. This compassionate and altruistic attitude, which stemmed from the people's recognition of their spiritual unity in God, was discussed in various Taiping publications. Hong's *First Exhortation*, for example, complained that "the ways of the world are perverse and wicked, while the minds of the people are intolerant and shallow, their loves and hates being all derived from selfishness [*si*]."[126] Hong contrasted that selfish society with the golden age of ancient China, claiming that in the world of the Three Dynasties—the ancient period when all Chinese people worshipped God—"those who had and those who had not were mutually compassionate, and in calamity they aided one another."[127] Hong's objective was, therefore, to restore the sympathetic and supportive social attitude that prevailed in the God-worshipping world of ancient China. Focusing on that moral objective, the *Book on the*

Principles of the Heavenly Nature outlined the responsibility of God's children to share resources and protect the weak and vulnerable of society:

> There being clothing, let all wear it. There being food, let all eat it. When someone is ill, others should ask a doctor to treat them and take care of their medicine. We must treat parentless boys and girls and persons of advanced age with more care, bathing them and washing and changing their clothes. Thus, we will not lose the idea of sharing joys and sorrows, as well as mutual concern over pain and illness.[128]

The world of Great Peace that the Taipings envisaged was completely free of selfish sentiments. The children of God were expected to share their joys with others and treat the pains and sorrows of their spiritual siblings as their own pain and sorrow. Separating oneself and one's interests from the wider spiritual community was not an option in the altruistic world of Great Peace.

The Taipings' desire to create a world characterized by fairness, selflessness, and compassion underlay the proposals of the *Land System of the Heavenly Dynasty* (*Tianchao tianmu zhidu*; 1853). That book outlined the economic system that the Taipings hoped to establish throughout their Heavenly Kingdom.[129] Its main proposals, based on the model of the Zhou dynasty (1045/1040–256 BCE; one of the Three Dynasties of ancient China) as described in the *Rites of Zhou* (*Zhouli*), were that land should be distributed equally among the people (according to the number of individuals in a household) and that the surplus grain and cash of every household should be stored in public granaries and treasuries. Those public grain stocks would relieve deficiencies in Taiping-controlled areas and provide nourishment for the most vulnerable members of society (such as orphans and the disabled).[130] The system would thus ensure that each individual had an opportunity to own land and sufficient food, clothing, and money to meet their needs. As the *Land System of the Heavenly Dynasty* explained,

> There being fields, let all cultivate them. There being food, let all eat it. There being clothing, let all wear it. There being money, let all use it, so that nowhere will inequality exist, and every person will be well fed and warm.[131]

The Taipings believed that this kind of economic system would form the structural foundation for the world of Great Peace, encouraging people to be selfless, mutually supportive, and compassionate toward the weak and helpless of society.

The Taipings' economic plan, despite its promise of land, food, clothing, and money for all, was not the blueprint for a proto-communist world.[132] A number of extracts from the *Land System of the Heavenly Dynasty* confirm that the Taipings upheld the established status distinctions of society. The inferior status of those who worked their own land was implied, for example, by the warning that corrupt officials would be "degraded from a high to a low station and reduced to mere husbandry."[133] Although the Taipings promised a fairer society that would guarantee a basic standard of living for all, this extract shows that they did not aspire to equalize the socio-economic statuses of God's children on earth. The agricultural work that those with newly acquired fields performed was still regarded as the occupation of the lowly.

The Great Peace Utopia as a Confucianized Kingdom of Heaven

The Great Peace utopia was a world in which all people rejected demons, worshipped the Heavenly Father, acknowledged their unity as spiritual siblings, and acted harmoniously and compassionately toward one another. Significantly, the Taipings' ambition to create this *earthly* utopia stemmed from Hong's interpretation of biblical and classical ideas about the moral perfection of the world. The Taipings not only associated their ideal world of Great Peace with the Kingdom of Heaven from Christianity, but also localized the meaning of the biblical concept through the social values of Confucianism.

The Taipings developed a radically original vision of the perfect world, but they were not the first religious group in Chinese history to announce the imminent arrival of Great Peace. *Taiping* was, in fact, an established religious concept that had been used by Chinese intellectuals and revolutionaries since the first century BCE.[134] One of those revolutionaries was Zhang Jiao, the leader of the Yellow Turban uprising of 184. In his millenarian vision, Zhang declared that his followers would escape the miseries of the current world and enjoy a new age of Great Peace under the Yellow Heaven (*huangtian*).[135] The concept of *taiping* at the heart of Zhang's vision also inspired later millenarian writings, such as the *Marvellous Scripture of the Highest Lingbao on Laozi Converting the Barbarians* (*Taishang Lingbao Laozi huahu miaojing*). That fifth-century Buddho-Daoist text described the disasters of the latter days and declared that the Heavenly Venerable (Tianzun) would save the elect "seed people"

(*zhongmin*), who would subsequently live in a world of Great Peace with the True Lord (Zhenjun) and the Buddha Maitreya.[136] Such historical examples show that Hong and his followers drew on an established concept from Chinese millenarian traditions in articulating their utopian vision.[137] Hong's interpretation of the Great Peace utopia was not, however, derived from the religious teachings of those millenarian movements. The earthly kingdom that the Taipings hoped to build for the children of God was actually inspired by the ideals and social values of Christianity and Confucianism.

The Kingdom of Heaven (*Tianguo*), a component of the Taipings' dynastic name (Taiping Tianguo; literally, "Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace"), was the most important biblical concept behind their vision of Great Peace. Hong first encountered the concept in Liang's *Good Words*, which explained that the Kingdom of Heaven had two distinct meanings. While the first meaning referred to the paradise of the afterlife, the second meaning pointed to "the multitude of people on earth who reverently believe in the Savior Jesus, and the public association [*gonghui*] of those who gather to worship the God of Heaven Shangdi."[138] Inspired by this distinction and Jesus' declaration that "the Kingdom of Heaven has come near" (Matthew 4:17, 10:7), Hong asserted that the biblical *Tianguo* referred to a spiritual realm of the afterlife *and* a physical kingdom to be realized on earth.[139] As Hong explained in his annotations to Matthew 5:13–48,

> Heaven above and earth below both are God the Father's Kingdom of Heaven. Do not make the mistake of believing that it indicates only the Kingdom of Heaven in heaven. Therefore, the Elder Brother's prophecy says, "The Kingdom of Heaven has come near." For this Kingdom of Heaven will come on earth. It is the Kingdom of Heaven that the Heavenly Father and Heavenly Elder Brother now have descended to earth to establish.[140]

Hong, as these annotations reveal, believed that he was fulfilling his elder brother's prophecy and bringing the Kingdom of Heaven to earth. In other annotations (1 Corinthians 15:45–58; Revelation 3:12, 21:1–27), Hong described the Taiping court and the Heavenly Capital at Nanjing as the Little Heaven (*xiao tiantang*) and the New Jerusalem (*xin Yelusaleng*) respectively.[141] These symbolic titles, together with Hong's notes on Matthew 5:13–48, suggest that the constructive aspect of the Taipings' vision of world salvation—the Great Peace utopia—was inspired by biblical references to an approaching Kingdom of Heaven.[142]

Hong was not the first Christian in history to announce the imminent establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Looking to prophetic literature such as the Book of Revelation, many millenarian groups in Europe and North America (especially during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) had previously predicted that the Kingdom of God would come to earth, lasting for one thousand years before the final judgment of the world.[143] In the USA, Joseph Smith (1805–44)—leader of the Mormons—proclaimed a message of world transformation that was similar in many ways to that of the Taipings. According to Smith and other Mormon leaders, gentile Christendom (that is, Catholicism and Protestantism) had corrupted the Church by abandoning the *original* spirit and teachings of Christianity. Although God had turned his back on the gentile "apostates," he had decided to gather and restore the House of Israel (which included American-Indian "descendants" of the Israelites and "adopted" Europeans and Americans) as his chosen people. The two gathering places for the Israelites were Jerusalem and Zion, the latter of which was located at Jackson County, Missouri.[144] Following the gathering of Israel, Jesus would return to earth in glory to destroy the evil and bring in the millennium.[145] This early Mormon millenarianism shows how the biblical text could elicit the kind of utopian vision that was later proclaimed by Hong. Hong's message was not an irrational or unchristian response to the Chinese Christian literature, but followed a common millenarian pattern in emphasizing the destruction of the evil, the preservation of God's elect, the restoration of primitive holiness, and the imminent arrival of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Hong and his followers viewed their utopian realm of Great Peace as the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Although the concept was derived from the Bible, the Taipings' descriptions of its defining characteristics were shaped by the ideals and social values of Confucianism. While Taiping claims about the fatherhood of God were unmistakably Christian in origin, their related belief in the brotherhood of humankind was inspired—or at least reinforced—by Chinese classical texts. In his *Second Exhortation*, Hong referred to passages from the classics (*Doctrine of the Mean* [*Zhongyong*], *Book of Poetry*, and *Book of History*) on Heaven's production of humankind to confirm that "the sages considered all under heaven as one family [*tianxia yijia*], and constantly cherished the feeling that all people are brothers."[146] Again, one of the Taipings' later publications directly quoted a maxim from the *Analects* (*Lunyu*) in stating that "all are brothers within

the four seas."[147] The incorporation of these classical ideas on the unity of the world as one family of brothers was not, however, simply due to Hong's cultural background as a classically trained scholar. Liang's *Good Words* had, in fact, originally introduced the ideas in discussing the breakdown of earthly divisions in Jesus, claiming that "all within the four seas are one class of brothers" and "all the people of the world are one family."[148] Thus, the Taipings' Confucianized declarations of human brotherhood in God may have originated in Liang's—rather than Hong's—observation of the overlap between Christian and Confucian concepts of a universal human family.

The influence of Confucianism on the Taipings' vision of Great Peace was not restricted to the notion of human brotherhood. The Taipings' discourses on universal compassion and mutual support also drew on established themes from Confucian social ethics. One obvious source of inspiration was the classical ideal of Great Unity (*datong*), a vision of the perfect society that was discussed in the *Book of Rites* (*Liji*). Hong, in his *First Exhortation*, directly quoted that book's description of the Great Unity utopia:

> Confucius said, "When the great Way was pursued, a public and common spirit ruled all under heaven.... Thus, men did not love their parents only, nor treat as children only their own sons. A competent provision was secured for the aged until their death.... They showed kindness and compassion to widows, orphans, childless men, and those who were disabled by disease, so that they were all sufficiently maintained.... This was [the period of] what we call the Great Unity."[149]

The Taipings, following the model of Confucius, idealized a world in which individuals felt compassion for people outside their immediate families and supported the weak and abandoned members of society. Like the Confucian ideal of Great Unity, their concept of Great Peace emphasized the interrelationship of all human beings and stressed the need for each person to adopt a spirit of public-mindedness in their social conduct. The basic justification for that ethical obligation was the universal fatherhood of God, but the obligation itself was significantly influenced by—if not derived from—the classical texts of Confucianism.

Implications of the Taipings' Localized Soteriology

The analysis of this chapter has shown that the Taipings constructed a localized vision of world salvation that was fundamentally shaped by terms and themes from the Chinese Christian literature. Firstly, the translated name of God (Shangdi) enabled Hong to develop a historically (Three Dynasties) and textually (Chinese classics) localized starting point for his salvation discourse. The problem was not that the Chinese people had perpetually rejected a truth from outside, but that they had gradually forgotten *their* ancient and classical God Shangdi. Themes from Liang's *Good Words* and the Chinese Bible also inspired the second key aspect of the Taipings' soteriological vision. Discourses on idolatry (*Good Words*, the second commandment, Psalm 115, and possibly Roberts' teaching), in particular, encouraged Hong to view Buddhist idols and the popular gods of Daoism and Chinese mythology as the demonic sources of spiritual ignorance in China. The Taipings' claim that those pervasive religious symbols were the cause of China's departure from its ancient, indigenous, and orthodox form of worship gave their vision of world salvation a remarkably localized quality. The third section on the Taipings' solution to their soteriological crisis revealed not only that they recognized a Chinese individual as the instrument of spiritual renewal in China, but also that biblical themes (Revelation 12, the Great Flood, and the Exodus) inspired—or at least justified—his mission to *exterminate* evil demons and *preserve* the upright followers of God. Hong's mission to destroy demons is not proof of his ethical deviation from Christianity, but an example of the intimate connection between the production of vernacular texts and the rearticulation of Christianity through the symbolism of local religious worlds—in Hong's case, a world of evil spirits and professional demon slayers.

The analysis of this chapter has also confirmed the importance of Hong's socio-cultural background to the development of the Taipings' vision of world salvation. Firstly, career failure was the occasion for Hong's enthusiastic reception of Christianity. The frustration and humiliation of repeatedly failing the prefectural examination explains why he turned to Liang's *Good Words* and found in it a message of personal and world salvation. Secondly, Hong's education and years of preparation for the civil service examinations furnished him with the intellectual perspective of a classically trained scholar. That intellectual perspective enabled Hong, because of a terminological overlap, to see the Christian God of Liang's *Good Words* and the Chinese Bible as the classical deity Shangdi. The result of that identification was Hong's conclusion that his newfound God was the

deity of ancient China and that idols, false gods, and the Chinese emperor were demonic usurpers that ought to be destroyed. The Confucian lens through which Hong viewed Christianity was thus responsible for the foundational beliefs of his localized (and later revolutionary) discourse of world salvation. This observation confirms, on a more abstract level, that localization occurs when a reader (or group of readers) of vernacularized texts responds to terms or themes that connect the Christian religion to their particular cultural world. As culture is always embedded in language, the recognition of such text-world overlaps is an almost inevitable consequence of vernacularization.

Besides telling us something about the relationship between vernacularization and localization, the analysis of this chapter helps to discredit some of the dominant interpretations of the Taipings' place in modern Chinese history. The final two sections on the concept of Great Peace showed that the Taipings developed an original interpretation of the biblical Kingdom of Heaven that drew heavily on themes from Confucian social ethics. That localized, or Confucianized, Kingdom of Heaven contradicts one of the most popular and misleading assumptions regarding the Taipings' belief system in historical scholarship.[150] Accepting Zeng Guofan's (1811–72) original claim that the doctrine of human brotherhood in God threatened the traditional Confucian understanding of human relationships, countless historians have argued that the Taipings proclaimed a revolutionary ideology of equality.[151] Whereas Zeng saw the notion of human brotherhood as evidence of the Taipings' heterodox character, more recent scholars in China have viewed it as confirmation of their identity as peasant rebels and historical precursors of the Chinese Communists. Li Jinquan, for example, has claimed that the appearance of an "egalitarian ideology" (*pingdeng pingjun sixiang*) reflected the "instincts" (*benneng*) and value system of peasant rebels in a feudal society.[152] An alternative reading of that egalitarian ideology, less common in the Chinese literature, is that it signifies the arrival of Western modernity and its attack on the traditional culture of China.[153]

The reality, as the analysis of this chapter has revealed, is that the Taipings did not proclaim an ideology of equality. Although they repeatedly declared that the people of the world were one family of spiritual siblings, their official books clearly demonstrate that they did not see that idea as a challenge to the established social order of China. The Taipings not only justified their "anti-feudal" and "anti-traditional" doctrine of human brotherhood with reference to the Confucian classics, but also associated the cultivation of harmony (*he*) with the popular obligation to respect and

uphold the status distinctions of society. The Taipings did not, in other words, see their belief in the brotherhood of humankind as an affirmation of social equality. Rather, the spiritually united children of God were expected to know and accept the hierarchies and inequalities of the social world. This unique combination of spiritual *unity* and social *inequality* in the Taipings' vision of Great Peace reveals not the Chinese peasants' challenge to feudalism or modernity's assault on Chinese tradition, but rather a classically trained scholar and his followers (especially Yang Xiuqing) reconciling their new belief in the universal fatherhood of God with the Confucian assumption that status distinctions were natural.[154] As we shall see in the following chapter, that assumption could not only coexist with the doctrines of Christianity, but also act as the means of their localization.

The final implication of the Taipings' vision of world salvation is that it confirms the existence of a historically unique national consciousness in Hong and his followers. The Taipings believed that the salvation of the Chinese nation lay in restoring the perfect world of antiquity in which all people acknowledged and worshipped the Heavenly Father Shangdi. In contrast to earlier anti-Manchu ideologies, the Taipings' hostility toward the northern "barbarians" was based on this new spiritual notion of national salvation.[155] The Manchus were "demons" that deserved to be destroyed not simply because they were ethnically non-Chinese, but because they rejected the original God of China and deepened the ignorance of the Chinese people. The Taipings' spiritual conception of national salvation also explains why they, unlike the later Boxers, held a favorable view of foreign missionaries. Whereas the Manchu demons rejected the Heavenly Father, the Taipings' "foreign brothers" recognized and worshipped him as the one true God. The Taipings' religious publications even suggested that the Western nations were spiritual exemplars that had constantly followed the "great path" (*dalu*) of God. Such observations confirm that the Taipings' vision of world salvation promoted not a xenophobic nationalism that sought "to protect the fatherland from the foreign devils of the West," but rather a theo-nationalist perspective that emphasized China's spiritual bond with the other Christian countries of the world.[156] The Taipings aimed to redeem the Chinese nation by restoring the God-worshipping culture of its ancient past and destroying the foreign enemies who opposed that spiritual restoration. But all foreigners who accepted the Heavenly Father were now regarded as brothers by the Taipings, showing that religious convictions were the basis of their national consciousness and understanding of the world outside.

CHAPTER 4

The Heavenly Father and His Non-divine Sons

The previous chapter analyzed the Taipings' vision of world salvation as an example of localized Christianity. The focus of this chapter is the Taipings' doctrine of God and the most controversial aspect of their theological worldview: namely, the claim that Hong was the second son of God and younger brother of Jesus. In order to establish the meaning of Hong's self-proclaimed identity as a son of God, the chapter will examine the Taipings' specific discourses on the nature of the Heavenly Father and his relation to Jesus and Hong. That analysis will show that the Taipings' beliefs about God and his sons expose not one man's blasphemous attempt to claim divine status for himself, but rather his preoccupation with protecting the uniqueness of the Heavenly Father Shangdi. That preoccupation, and the highly monotheistic doctrine of God that it spawned, was a product of the Taipings' restorationist vision of world salvation. By analyzing Hong's claims within this wider (and previously ignored) theological framework, the present chapter will support a new interpretation that views the title second son of God not as evidence of the Taipings' heterodox character, but as an access point for understanding their localized doctrine of God.

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The Two Natures of Christ and the Doctrine of the Trinity

To understand how the Taipings localized the Christian deity, we must firstly consider the doctrine of God that Protestant missionaries exported to China. Most of the Protestant missionaries in China at the time of the Taiping Rebellion would have subscribed to the Chalcedonian definition and the doctrine of the Trinity. The Chalcedonian definition explained the relation of humanity and divinity in the person of Jesus Christ, while the doctrine of the Trinity defined the nature and composition of the Christian Godhead. The details of these interrelated doctrines allow us to see both the truly original character of the Taipings' ideas about God and the reasons why so many missionaries rejected those ideas as heterodox.

The Council of Nicaea (325), the foundation of both Chalcedonian and Trinitarian orthodoxy, was convened in response to the Arian controversy. The Arians believed that the Son (Jesus Christ), as a *generated* creature, could not share the divinity of the eternal and ungenerated God. The Council of Nicaea rejected those claims and declared in its Profession of Faith that Jesus Christ was "God from God, light from light, true God from true God, *begotten* not made, *consubstantial* with the Father [emphases added]."[1] As this oft-quoted passage shows, the Council explained Jesus' precise relation to the Father through the term consubstantial (Greek *homoousios*, "of the same substance"). This technical term confirmed that Jesus shared the divine being or essence of the Father. In addition, the Council used the term begotten (instead of made) to stress that the fully divine Son was co-eternal with the Father, rather than created at a specific moment in time. This key idea stripped the Arians of their argument that Jesus, as a generated creature, could not be substantially united with an ungenerated God. According to the Council, Jesus was the fully divine Son of God and the ontological equal of the Father.

Nicaea provided the foundational affirmation of Jesus' divinity, but the Council of Chalcedon (451) produced the definitive statement on the two natures and their relation in the person of Christ. The Council's Definition of Faith asserted that Jesus Christ was "perfect in Godhead and perfect in manhood, very God and very man."[2] Jesus, in other words, possessed both human and divine natures simultaneously. The Council's Definition of Faith emphasized, furthermore, that humanity and divinity were not combined into one nature following their union and that the possession of two natures did not render Jesus two persons:

> Without the distinction of natures being taken away by such union, but rather the peculiar property of each nature being preserved and being united in one Person and subsistence, not separated or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son and only-begotten, God the Word, our Lord Jesus Christ.[3]

The Chalcedonian definition thus taught that two separate natures—the human and the divine—were perfectly united in the one person of Christ. Confusing the two natures, acknowledging one and not the other, and dividing the person of Christ were equally blasphemous from this orthodox perspective.

The declarations of the above councils provided the theological basis for the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity. The two key terms in the Trinitarian doctrine, which were derived from the Christological debates, are *ousia* and *hypostasis*. *Ousia* (as in *homoousios* above) refers to an inward quality: the nature of divinity or the substance/essence of God. *Hypostasis*, translated in English as "person," refers to outward qualities: the special form(s) in which the *ousia* exists. Drawing on this distinction, the doctrine of the Trinity affirms that the one divine *substance* is manifested in three distinct but ontologically equal *persons*: namely, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.[4] As the Athanasian Creed—one of the most commonly used professions of faith in the history of Christianity—put it,

> We worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one, the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal.[5]

The Athanasian Creed, as we can see from this extract, used the terms substance and person to stress both the unity of the Christian Godhead and the distinctness of its individual members. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were, in short, three distinct persons united in one divine substance.

The belief that Jesus was both human and divine enabled theologians to explain not only his identity as a member of the Christian Godhead, but also his unique role as the savior of humankind. This connection between Christology and soteriology can be seen most clearly in Anselm's (c. 1033–1109) classic work *Why God Became a Man* (*Cur Deus Homo*; 1098). According to Anselm's theory of atonement, the human race had

frustrated the original purpose of its creation (that is, eternal blessedness) by dishonoring God through sin. Anselm thus argued that humankind would have to pay back its "debt" to God (that is, restore God's lost honor) if it was to enjoy that eternal blessedness. The problem, however, was that sinful humans lacked the power and resources to repay God.[6] Humankind was required (as the offender) to make satisfaction for its sin, but God alone had the power to do so. Therefore, Anselm declared that a God-man (possessing both the divine *ability* and the human *obligation*) would have to make it.[7] That God-man was, of course, Jesus Christ.[8] Despite subsequent modifications to Anselm's satisfaction theory of atonement, its basic idea that only a truly human and truly divine being could redeem humankind became—and remained at the time of the Taiping Rebellion—the foundation of Christian thinking about salvation.

The Chalcedonian definition and the doctrine of the Trinity constituted the common orthodoxy of Western Christianities in the nineteenth century. Most Protestant missionaries, keen to uphold that orthodox core, would have determined the (in)correctness of a new form of Christianity by examining its ideas on the two natures of Christ and the three persons of the Godhead. The strength of that commitment to the principles of Chalcedonian and Trinitarian orthodoxy can be observed with particular clarity in British and American missionaries' reports on the Taipings' religious beliefs. Those reports, the focus of the following section, saw the clearest evidence of the Taipings' "unchristian" character in their denial of Jesus' ontological uniqueness (in relation to other human beings) and their failure to understand the triune nature of God.

An "Imposter" and "Anti-Christ": Missionary Reports on the Second Son of God

The most regular reporters on the religious character of the Taipings were Protestant missionaries from Britain and the USA. Those missionaries wanted to know how their religion had been received by the Taipings, if it had been altered in any significant way, and whether the rebels were willing to be instructed in gospel truth as they understood it. The Taipings' belief that Hong was the second son of God and younger brother of Jesus roused the missionaries' interest more than any other doctrine. The missionaries were divided on how exactly to interpret that belief, but they were united in their conviction that it was a blasphemous threat to orthodox truth.

For many of the missionaries who directly encountered the Taipings, the doctrine of God and his two sons stood out as the clearest sign of the rebels' deviation from Christian truth. The missionaries were most offended not by Hong's divine mission to destroy demons, but by the title son of God that he ascribed to himself. According to one group of missionaries, the title showed that Hong saw himself as the *equal* of Jesus, a belief that would threaten the Christological, Trinitarian, and soteriological orthodoxies at the heart of their theological worldviews. As Alexander Wylie, a member of the LMS, put it, "The monstrous doctrine they have adopted of Hung-seu-tseuen being the second son of God, and on a par with Jesus Christ … is, I fear, a most serious obstacle to their humble reception of the truth as it is in Jesus."[9] In a more aggressive criticism of the same doctrine, the English Methodist W. N. Hall (1829–78) described Hong as an "imposter" and "Anti-christ" who "claims equality with Jesus" and "is worshipped by his followers as equal to Christ."[10] Some of the missionaries even claimed that Hong was incorporating himself into the Godhead as a fully divine son of God. As the American Baptist Issachar Roberts concluded following a fifteen-month stay in Nanjing, "I believe him to be a crazy man … making himself equal with Jesus Christ, who, with God the Father, himself, and his own son, constitute one Lord over all!"[11] A similar conclusion was expressed by the English Methodist Josiah Cox, who reported in his journal that the "Heavenly King sets up himself, and is worshipped as Divine."[12]

According to these missionaries, the title second son of God exposed Hong's blasphemous attempt to claim ontological equality with Jesus and divine status for himself. This interpretation shows that the missionaries saw Hong's title—or the general idea of a second son of God—as an attack on their common orthodoxy. The missionaries believed that there could only be one son of God in order to protect both the Trinitarian concept of the deity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) and the ontological uniqueness of Jesus as savior of the world. If there were multiple sons of God as the Taipings claimed, then Jesus would no longer be the *one-and-only* God-man (fully divine and fully human) with the *special* ability to reconcile God and fallen humankind through his life, suffering, death, and resurrection. Another son of God—in this case, Hong—could theoretically have acted as savior of the world. Wylie, Hall, Roberts, and Cox were thus rejecting what they saw as an intolerable challenge to the orthodox doctrines of God and salvation.

The analysis of this chapter will reveal that the missionaries' orthodox lens caused them to misrepresent the Taipings' doctrine of God and their understanding of Hong's relation to the deity in particular. Having imposed their own theological assumptions (namely, that a son of God was necessarily divine) onto Hong's claim to be the second son of God, the missionaries concluded that he saw himself as a divine equal of Christ when in fact he acknowledged both his own non-divine nature and the superior status of his elder brother Jesus. The missionaries thus reported not the actual meaning of Hong's title for the Taipings, but their own fears about its theological implications. They did not realize that their fear of an ordinary human being claiming the identity of God was shared by Hong and his followers—opposition to usurpers of God's position was actually one of the guiding principles of Taiping theology.

Another group of missionaries put forward an alternative interpretation of Hong's claim to be the second son of God. Rather than reading the claim as an affirmation of Hong's equality with Jesus and divine status, these missionaries interpreted the title son of God metaphorically: Hong believed that he and Jesus were both chosen by God to carry out divine missions, but he did not believe that they were sons of God in a literal sense. The reports of Joseph Edkins (1823–1905) and Griffith John, both of the LMS, offer the clearest articulations of this figurative interpretation. According to Edkins, the Taipings referred to Jesus and Hong as "natural brothers" (*tongbao dixiong*) not to show that they were divine sons of God, but to emphasize the complementary missions that the Heavenly Father had given to them. As Edkins put it,

> His [Hong's] views of the divine nature of Christ are imperfect.... He regards Christ as the greatest of God's messengers, and himself as second only to him; and it is in this light that he believes himself to be brother of Christ and God's son.[13]

John likewise asserted that Hong's claim to be the brother of Jesus was based on his conviction that "the Saviour is the greatest of God's messengers, and he himself the second."[14] The title son of God that the Taipings applied to Jesus and Hong thus signified not their consubstantial relation to God (having the same divine nature as the Heavenly Father), but their unique identity as the two individuals who had been chosen by God to carry out divine missions in the world. This interpretation of the Taipings' claims about Jesus and Hong explains why other observers compared the religion of the rebels to Islam and Unitarianism.[15]

From the figurative perspective of Edkins and John, the theological consequence of the title second son of God was not that it secured god-like status for Hong (as the literalists had argued), but that it stripped Jesus of his divinity and made him nothing more than a human—albeit the greatest—messenger of God.[16] For most of the missionaries working in China, this non-divine Jesus would have lost not only his identity as the second member of the Trinity, but also his ability to offer the necessary sacrifice (a fully divine and fully human being) to reconcile God and humankind. This key observation shows that the literal and figurative interpretations took alternative routes to reach the same conclusion that Hong's claim to be the second son of God was Christologically and soteriologically heterodox. Both confirmed, in other words, that Hong and the Taipings were not followers of "authentic" Christianity.

Despite supporting the same conclusion as the literalists, the figurative critique provided a more accurate representation of Taiping beliefs about Jesus and Hong. The Taipings, as Edkins and John explained, believed that neither Jesus nor Hong was God—the Heavenly Father was the sole divine being in the Taipings' theology. However, the idea that the Taipings simply saw Jesus and Hong as human messengers of God (rather than actual sons of God) is inconsistent with the descriptions of an intimate heavenly family in Taiping texts. The analysis of this chapter will show that while the Taipings did not accept the divinity of Jesus, they still believed that he and his younger brother Hong were the natural (as opposed to adopted) sons of God.

Taiping Anthropomorphism: The Heavenly Father and the Heavenly Wives

Drawing on a range of original documents, this and the following section will offer a more reliable account of the Taipings' beliefs about God, Jesus, and Hong. The analysis of those beliefs will reveal not only how the Taipings localized the image of God through the symbolism and conventions of their local religious culture, but also how they made sense of Jesus' identity from a highly monotheistic perspective that revolved around the oneness and uniqueness of the Heavenly Father Shangdi.

The *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle* offered a vivid description of the deity that Hong encountered following his ascension to heaven in 1837. The Heavenly Father, according to Hong's report, was an anthropomorphic God who wore a high-brimmed hat, a black dragon robe (*heilongpao*), and a golden beard that drooped down to his stomach. His body was

extremely tall, his clothing was neat and proper, and he sat with his hands placed on his knees. This physical appearance greatly impressed Hong, who interpreted the clothing, characteristics, and conduct of the Heavenly Father as signs of his dignity and exalted status.[17] After Hong had knelt before and greeted him, the noble Shangdi began to speak:

> You have come up? Listen to what I say. The extent to which the people of the world have lost their original hearts [*benxin*] is extreme.... They have been greatly deluded by demons, and they waste those things that I have bestowed on them as offerings to demons, as if the demons had produced them and nourished them.[18]

Like the description of God's physical form, the record of his many spoken pronouncements in the *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle* confirms that the Taipings saw no contradiction in holding both an iconoclastic attitude toward religious idols and an anthropomorphic view of their deity.[19] Hong despised idols not because they represented an incorporeal deity in concrete form, but because they symbolized a blasphemous attempt to usurp the position of the one supreme God.

Hong's anthropomorphic image of the Heavenly Father was central to the Taipings' theological worldview. Those who denied the corporeal nature of God were not only rejecting the majesty of the Heavenly Father (as constructed by Hong), but also questioning the authenticity of the visions through which Hong legitimized his mission and position as Heavenly King. Hong's great anxiety to protect the physical appearance of God (and, by implication, his own authority) can be seen in his edited version of Medhurst's *Important Discourses on Heavenly Principles*, in which he altered and deleted various passages that seemed to contradict his understanding of God's bodily form. Whereas Medhurst had claimed in the original text that "Shangdi is immaterial and invisible, without beginning or end," Hong's edited version stated that "Shangdi in heaven is without beginning or end, and can only be seen by those who ascend to heaven."[20] Hong thus emphasized the corporeality of God not only by deleting Medhurst's claim that Shangdi was "immaterial and invisible" (*wuxing ke jian*), but also by suggesting that those who ascended to heaven could—like Hong in 1837—*see* him. In a second example, Hong deleted a full passage on God's lacking hands and feet and changed the description of Shangdi as "a spirit without a body" (*ling wushen*) to "a spirit and one alone" (*shenling wu'er*).[21] The alterations in the Taiping

version thus shifted the emphasis of the text from the incorporeal nature of God to the oneness and uniqueness of the Heavenly Father Shangdi. The immateriality of God was a dispensable doctrine for the Taipings, but his oneness was an absolute truth.

Besides giving the Heavenly Father a physical body, the Taipings' religious publications claimed that he had a female consort named the Heavenly Mother (Tianmu). According to the *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle*, this wife of God cleansed Hong's body before his audience with the Heavenly Father and assisted him during his battles against the demons.[22] She was, as the *Three Character Classic* explained to its young readers, "kind and exceedingly gracious, beautiful and noble in the extreme, far beyond all compare."[23] Her children included Jesus, Hong, and the "host of little sisters" (*zhong xiaomei*) in heaven.[24] The Heavenly Mother and her many daughters were not, however, the only women in heaven, for the Taipings also gave Jesus a wife named the Heavenly Elder Sister-in-law (Tiansao). This Heavenly Elder Sister-in-law was, according to Hong's report, the compassionate counterpart to Jesus. Whereas Jesus "became enraged" (*fanu*) while teaching Hong to read in heaven, the Heavenly Elder Sister-in-law was "very considerate of him" and "acted as a mother to him."[25] The Taipings completed the heavenly family by granting Hong a wife called the First Moon (Zheng Yuegong).[26] In carrying out her role as Hong's wife, the First Moon respectfully served him and gave birth to his son in heaven. As the *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle* explained, "In the high heaven the Lord's consort, the First Moon, served the Lord most diligently and respectfully. At this time she gave birth to a son, who had not yet been given a name."[27] This statement confirms that the three heavenly consorts were not simply the female counterparts or equivalents of the Heavenly Father, Jesus, and Hong, but were their actual wives with whom they produced offspring in heaven.[28]

Hong's belief that the Heavenly Father had a bodily form represents the first example of localization in the Taipings' doctrine of God. In contrast to the "immaterial and formless" (*wuxing wuxiang*) God of Liang's *Good Words*, Hong's anthropomorphic Heavenly Father was inspired by images of popular deities from his local religious world.[29] Chinese popular gods often took the appearance of bureaucratic officials, sitting in an upright position with their hands placed on their knees. The Earth God, for example, was commonly depicted as a man wearing a hat, a bureaucratic robe, and a long white beard. The City God was also widely represented as a scholar-official who wore a bureaucratic robe.[30] Hong's claim that the Heavenly Father wore a hat, a dragon robe, and a long golden

beard shows that he viewed and recreated the Christian God that he met in Liang's book through this popular religious lens. Although Hong's iconoclastic theology violently opposed the many "false gods" of China, he continued to draw on their core physical characteristics in describing the Heavenly Father Shangdi. The beard and clothes that Hong gave to the Heavenly Father, in particular, communicated his divine authority to an audience that associated such symbols with dignified status.

Hong's localized image of the Heavenly Father may have been strengthened by his reading of the scriptures and the passage "Shangdi created humankind in his image" (Genesis 1:27) in particular.[31] An indication that this biblical idea was absorbed by the Taipings can be found in the *Imperially Composed Thousand Word Edict* (*Yuzhi qianzi zhao*; 1854), an instructional book that served the same purpose as the *Three Character Classic*. In explaining the creation of humankind, the text offered an elaborate description of the human body and claimed that it *resembled* the image of the Heavenly Father:

> All forms and colors in this mortal world are created by the Holy Father [Shengfu]. Ears, eyes, tongues, and noses; hearts, livers, lungs, and the bowels; abdomens, backs, ribs, and armpits; fat, diaphragms, intestines, and bellies; necks, shoulders, and heads; faces, feet, and hands; buttocks, kidneys, spleens, and stomachs; thighs, arms, and hips. This image, resembling that of the Father, was bestowed in very ancient times.[32]

A further indication of the passage's significance to the Taipings can be found in Joseph Edkins' account of his visit to Nanjing in 1861. Edkins reported that a "Taiping advocate," during a theological discussion with the missionary, had used the text of Genesis 1:27 to defend the idea that "God is like man in body."[33] Such evidence suggests that the text of Genesis—one of the three Old Testament books that the Taipings originally printed—may have consolidated the anthropomorphic image of God in Hong's mind, confirming the authenticity of his visions and the specific claim that he had *seen* the Heavenly Father in the form of a man.

Hong's belief that the Heavenly Father had a female consort in heaven shows the great extent to which popular religious symbols and conventions affected his understanding of God. Popular deities such as the Earth God and the City God not only had physical bodies and donned official robes, but also had wives and children like their male worshippers on earth. The temples of such gods could even include specially reserved living quarters

for their families.[34] The Taipings' descriptions of a Heavenly Mother and a Heavenly Elder Sister-in-law confirm that Hong applied this popular religious convention of pairing male gods with female consorts to both the Heavenly Father and Jesus. The heavenly wives show that Hong, in articulating his visions, transformed the Heavenly Father from the pure spirit that was discussed in the texts of Liang and Medhurst to an anthropomorphic God who—like the popular deities he replaced—had a wife, two sons, and numerous daughters in heaven. Significantly, this localized belief that the Christian deity was the head of a celestial family probably stemmed from Hong's reading of biblical passages that described God as Father (Fu) and Jesus as the "son of Shangdi" (*Shangdi zhi zi*).[35] For an individual accustomed to seeing popular deities with female consorts, the suggestion that God had fathered a son would almost certainly have provoked thoughts of a heavenly wife and mother.

Taiping Monotheism: "The Heavenly Father Alone Is the One True God"

Moving beyond the Taipings' portrait of the heavenly family, this section will look at their specific ideas on the nature of God and his relation to Jesus and Hong. The analysis of those ideas will reveal that the Taipings localized the Christian God not only by giving the Heavenly Father a physical form and a female consort, but also by declaring that he was the sole divine being and the exclusive holder of the title Shangdi.

Of the Taipings' many religious publications, the *Book of Heavenly Commandments* contained the most orthodox statement on the nature of God. Affirming the Trinitarian conception of the deity, a song of praise within the book declared that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were God: "We praise Shangdi, the Holy Heavenly Father. We praise Jesus, the Holy Savior. We praise the Wind of the Holy God, the Holy Spirit. We praise the three, who are united as one true God."[36] The final part of this extract explicitly states that the three persons constitute *one* true God. This single affirmation of the three persons' ontological unity was, however, the closest that the Taipings came to a Trinitarian doctrine of God. Adopting a highly monotheistic perspective, the Taipings repeatedly claimed in their texts that the Heavenly Father alone was God, that Jesus was a non-divine son of God, and that the Holy Spirit was the spiritual expression of the Heavenly Father in the world (to be discussed in Chapter 6).

One explanation for the anomalous nature of the above extract is that it originated in a doxology that Hong had learned during his stay with Issachar Roberts and continued to use despite his opposition to the Trinitarian view of God. This explanation is supported by one of Roberts' reports on the Taipings, in which he spoke of a doxology and hymn that he had "taught Hung Siu-tsiuen when he was with me at Canton in 1847."[37] Roberts also told Joseph Edkins in 1861 (when Roberts was living with the Taipings at Nanjing) that the doxology he used during religious services at Nanjing was the same as the one that he had formerly used "when the chief of the Taipings was for a time his catechumen at Canton."[38] Significantly, the account of Augustus Lindley (1840–73), who also lived among the Taipings in the early 1860s, confirms that the doxology recited during the Taipings' religious services (and presumably acquired from Roberts) was identical to the one recorded in the *Book of Heavenly Commandments*.[39]

As well as affirming the corporeal nature of God and granting him a female consort, the Taipings' religious books outlined various qualities and functions that defined the Heavenly Father Shangdi. Like most other monotheistic religious groups, the Taipings emphasized God's unique identity as the creator of the world. As the first sentence of the *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle* explained, "In the beginning the Heavenly Father, the Supreme Lord and Great Shangdi, in six days made heaven and earth, mountains and seas, and people and things."[40] The Taipings' religious publications also discussed God's role as the spiritual father of humankind. Two of Hong's earliest works (*First Exhortation* and *Second Exhortation*), for example, declared that Shangdi was "the universal Father of the whole mortal world" and that he "produces, nourishes, and protects the people."[41] Finally, the Taipings identified God as the regulator of natural forces in the world. In two separate texts (*Ode on the Origin of the Way* and *Second Exhortation*), Hong claimed that the sun, rain, thunder, and wind were all "spiritual wonders" (*lingmiao*) of God.[42] Taken together, these descriptions of Shangdi's core functions reveal a highly monotheistic image of God. The Heavenly Father Shangdi, according to the Taipings, was a universal and all-powerful deity who created the world, sustained its life forms, and controlled its natural phenomena.

The Taipings, in several official books, explicitly discussed the unitary nature of their omnipotent God, the Heavenly Father Shangdi. In his proclamation of December 1851, which was subsequently published in the *Book of Heavenly Decrees and Proclamations* (*Tianming zhaozhi shu*; 1852), Hong asserted that the Heavenly Father alone was God (Shen):

> Only the Heavenly Father, the Supreme Lord and Great Shangdi, is the true God. Besides the Heavenly Father, the Supreme Lord and Great Shangdi, all others are non-divine. The Heavenly Father, the Supreme Lord and Great Shangdi, is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent.[43]

The *Taiping Songs on World Salvation* also underlined the Heavenly Father's exclusive status as God: "Now, heaven, earth, and all things have been created by our Heavenly Father. Thus, the Heavenly Father alone is the one true God [*duyi zhen Shen*], and there is none more honorable than him."[44] Again, the *Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature* instructed its readers to "recognize truly that the Heavenly Father, the Supreme Lord and Great Shangdi, alone is the one true God."[45] The book also repeated Hong's earlier claim that "besides the Heavenly Father, the Supreme Lord and Great Shangdi, all others are non-divine."[46] The Taipings' official publications, as these various extracts show, unambiguously stated that the Heavenly Father alone was God (Shen) and that all other beings were "non-divine" (*feishen*) in nature. These claims clearly suggest that the Taipings saw neither Jesus nor Hong as God. If Hong did believe that Jesus was divine, then he would surely have added his name to the various statements that described the Heavenly Father alone as God.

The Taipings believed that their unitary God, the Heavenly Father Shangdi, had two sons: Jesus Christ and Hong Xiuquan.[47] The *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle* implied that Hong was the second son of God by calling him the "true ordained Son of Heaven" (*zhenming Tianzi*) and the "natural younger brother" (*baodi*) of Jesus.[48] Other books were more explicit in discussing Hong's identity as a son of God. Focusing on the birth order of God's sons, the *Taiping Songs on World Salvation* explained that "the Heavenly Elder Brother is our Heavenly Father's first-born son [Crown Prince], and the Heavenly King is our Heavenly Father's second son [*di'er zi*]."[49] Taiping publications emphasized Jesus' precedence as the first-born son of God not only through the titles Heavenly Elder Brother (Tianxiong) and Crown Prince (Taizi), but also through the more common and homely appellation of "elder brother" (*ge*).[50] Hong's precise status as the *second* son of God was also underlined by the Taiping court historian Huang Zaixing, who used the designation *cizi* ("second son") to describe his filial relation to the Heavenly Father.[51] These various titles suggested that the relation of Jesus and Hong to God was qualitatively different to that of all other human beings who had received their souls from—and thus qualified as spiritual children of—the Heavenly Father.

Jesus and Hong were literal sons of God who enjoyed an intimacy with the Heavenly Father that was experienced by no other human being on earth.

Hong's special bond with God was discussed in several official books that sought to legitimize his position as the true Son of Heaven (Tianzi). On the divine origin of Hong, Yang Xiuqing and Xiao Chaogui claimed that "Heaven produced the true Lord" (*Tian sheng Zhenzhu*) and that he was the "true son" (*zhenzi*) of God.[52] Yang's *Taiping Songs on World Salvation* also emphasized Hong's unique relation to God by claiming that his Heaven-endowed intelligence far exceeded that of the ordinary people.[53] The same book suggested, furthermore, that Hong embodied the moral will of God in his attitude and conduct as Sovereign. He was "generously benevolent and compassionate," "vast and boundless in his liberality," and his rule and teachings were "all in conformity with the law of Heaven [*Tianfa*]."[54] Such statements from the works of Yang and Xiao served to reinforce the general claim that Hong was the second son of God. They presented Hong as an individual who was literally produced by Heaven and invested with certain godlike attributes (for example, Heaven-endowed intelligence and perfect virtue) that set him apart from the rest of the people on earth.

In order to demonstrate further the uniqueness of his and Jesus' bond with God, Hong asserted in his annotations to the New Testament that they (along with Yang Xiuqing) had been specially created by the Heavenly Father and the Heavenly Mother before the world and other human beings existed.[55] As Hong put it, "The Elder Brother, myself, and the Eastern King were originally born out of the belly of the Heavenly Father Shangdi's first wife (that is, the Heavenly Mother) before heaven and earth existed."[56] Hong, as these notes confirm, believed that he and Jesus were the natural and original sons of God, and not merely the recipients of divine messages or missions. The specific claim that he and Jesus were originally born from the "belly" (*duchang*) of God's wife vividly expressed the literal nature of that father-son relationship.[57] Hong did not, however, use the narrative of his and Jesus' original creation to prove that they were fully divine members of the Godhead. Hong's intention was to demonstrate not that he and Jesus were divine or equal in status to the Heavenly Father Shangdi, but simply that they were distinct from and higher than all other *human* beings in the world.

Hong's discourses on the divine titles reveal one of the principal ways in which he impressed on his followers the distinction between God and his sons. Those discourses, by prohibiting the application of certain titles

to Jesus and Hong, underlined Hong's core belief that the Heavenly Father alone was God. Shangdi, the translated name of God in the Chinese Christian literature, was the first title that Hong restricted to the Heavenly Father. In his proclamation of December 1851, Hong declared that "besides the Heavenly Father, the Supreme Lord and Great Shangdi, there is no one who can usurp the title 'Supreme' [Shang] or usurp the title 'God' [Di]." Hong thus announced that all Taiping soldiers and officers would henceforth address him as Lord (Zhu) and not Supreme, so as to avoid offending the Heavenly Father.[58] He also asserted in one of his pre-rebellion texts (*Second Exhortation*) that the prohibition on using the divine title Shangdi extended to his elder brother Jesus. After explicitly stating (on the previous page) that "besides the Great Shangdi there is no other God [Shen]," Hong explained that Jesus—like him—could only be addressed as Lord:

> Even Jesus the Savior, the first-born son of the Great Shangdi, is only called our Lord. In heaven above and on earth below, among people, who is greater than Jesus? Jesus still cannot be called God [Di]. Who then dares to assume the designation of God?[59]

This passage implied that the Chinese emperor, who used the character *di* in his official title *huangdi*, had blasphemously usurped the position of God. It also suggested, on a theological level, that Hong saw neither Jesus nor himself as a divine being. Nobody on earth was higher than Jesus, but even he could not assume the name and status of God.

The Taipings' denial of Jesus' divinity was not only implied in their discourses on the titles of God. In his annotations to the New Testament, Hong (probably in response to Protestant missionaries' attempts to correct his theological views) explicitly and repeatedly stated that the Heavenly Father alone was God and that the Heavenly Elder Brother was an entirely separate non-divine being.[60] On Jesus' explanation of the two great commandments (Mark 12:28–34), Hong commented, "The Elder Brother clearly proclaims that there is only one Great Lord. Why did later disciples mistakenly explain that Christ was Shangdi? To believe their explanation is to have two Gods."[61] Again, Hong wrote in his annotations to Romans 1:4 that "Christ is Shangdi's son, and not Shangdi."[62] He also dismissed the doctrine of the incarnation (God's becoming a human being in Jesus) in his comments on Luke 1:34–35, claiming that the meaning of the passage was that "the Holy God Shangdi came down to her [that is, Mary]"

and not that "the Holy God Shangdi entered her belly, was conceived, and became a man."[63] Hong thus believed that although Jesus was the literal and natural son of Shangdi, he was not a direct incarnation of God. The idea that one divine substance was manifested in both the Father and the Son was not accepted by the Taipings. According to Hong's annotations to Mark 12:28–34, the doctrine conflicted with the truth of God's absolute oneness and created a second deity in Jesus.

Despite denying the divinity of Jesus, Hong presented him as the greatest of all human beings and the individual with the closest connection to the Heavenly Father Shangdi. In his comments on Jesus' baptism (Mark 1:9–13), Hong claimed that the Holy God Shangdi "dwells above the Elder Brother and leads the Elder Brother."[64] He also left similar notes on Mark 2:3–12: "Shangdi dwells above the Elder Brother. Therefore, when he commanded the paralyzed one, he immediately arose."[65] In his notes on the Gospel of Matthew, Hong reiterated that "Shangdi dwells above the Elder Brother" and explained that the presence of God enabled Jesus to cleanse the leper (8:1–4), cure the mother-in-law of Peter (8:14–15), and heal the blind and the mute (9:27–35).[66] He also explicitly stated in other notes that Jesus' deeds in the world were "the acts of Shangdi."[67] Hong, as these annotations reveal, believed that God was with Jesus in a direct way on earth. The Heavenly Father not only "dwelled above" and guided Jesus during his life, but also conferred supernatural abilities (for example, healing powers) on him. This intimacy with and ease of access to God, rather than the possession of a divine nature, set Jesus apart from all other human beings in the world.[68] According to Hong, it was possible to assert Jesus' uniqueness in relation to humankind without making him a divine equal of the Heavenly Father.

Hong's proclamation of December 1851 further emphasized the elevated status of Jesus. Introducing another restricted term, Hong asserted that only the Heavenly Father and the Heavenly Elder Brother could be addressed as "holy" (*sheng*). As Hong explained,

> The Heavenly Father is the Holy Heavenly Father, and the Heavenly Elder Brother is the Holy Savior. The Heavenly Father and the Heavenly Elder Brother alone are holy. Henceforth, all soldiers and officers may address me as Lord, and that is all. It is not appropriate to call me Holy, lest you offend the Heavenly Father and the Heavenly Elder Brother.[69]

This discussion on the holiness of God and his first-born son suggested not only that Jesus was higher than all human beings outside the heavenly family, but also that he occupied a more prominent position in the family

than his younger brother Hong (who was prohibited from using the designation *sheng*). The Taipings firmly denied the idea that Jesus was God, but Hong's deferential attitude toward his elder brother confirms that they regarded him as the greatest of all non-divine (*feishen*) beings.[70]

God, Jesus, and Hong: The Roots of the Heavenly Hierarchy

The Taipings' religious publications reveal a radically original and highly monotheistic doctrine of God. The Heavenly Father Shangdi was, according to the Taipings, the one true God (Shen). Jesus and Hong were the natural sons of God, and Jesus—as the Crown Prince and Heavenly Elder Brother—was the most holy and honorable person ever to have appeared on earth. Despite granting Jesus that elevated status, the Taipings categorically rejected the idea that he was a divine equal of the Heavenly Father. This section will examine why exactly the Taipings adopted this highly monotheistic doctrine that acknowledged the divinity of the Heavenly Father alone.[71] The analysis will show that the Taipings' doctrine of God was a response not only to terms and themes from the translated biblical text, but also to theological priorities that were determined by Hong's soteriological vision and its interpretation of China's religious history.

The Taipings' denial of Jesus' identity as the fully divine and only son of God was not an extension of Liang Fa's theology as expressed in *Good Words*. Although Liang did not dedicate specific sections of his work to the incarnation and the Trinity, he acknowledged the divinity of Jesus and the triune nature of the Godhead in his other religious discussions. Upholding the Chalcedonian definition, Liang asserted that Jesus—God's "only-begotten son" (*dusheng zi*)—possessed both a "human nature" (*ren zhi xing*) and a "divine nature" (*Shen zhi xing*).[72] Liang also explained that Jesus, the Son, was one of the three members of the Christian Godhead:

> Beyond this most honorable, unique, and truly living God of Heaven Shangdi (whom we address as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), the many gods, Buddhas, and bodhisattvas that have been set up by humankind are not God and should not be worshipped.[73]

The Taipings' belief that the Heavenly Father alone was God (Shangdi, Shen) did not, as this extract demonstrates, originate in Liang's theology—Liang accepted the Trinitarian idea that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

were equally divine. As the Taipings' monotheistic doctrine was not a simple extension of Liang's theology, we need to examine how aspects of Hong's religious thought and specific themes from the Chinese Christian literature could have encouraged their new beliefs about God.

The desire to uphold the authenticity of Hong's religious visions was one of the factors that inclined the Taipings toward a monotheistic doctrine that denied the divinity of Jesus. At the heart of Hong's visions was the claim that he had met both the Heavenly Father and the Heavenly Elder Brother during his stay in heaven. The record of his visions in the *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle* emphasized, furthermore, that the Heavenly Father and Jesus were two *distinct* individuals: the Heavenly Father had his own anthropomorphic body and he and Jesus were accompanied by female consorts named the Heavenly Mother and the Heavenly Elder Sister-in-law. Just as Hong saw the notion of an incorporeal God as a challenge to his description of Shangdi's physical appearance, so too he believed that the divinity of Jesus and his ontological unity with the Father undermined his claim that they existed in heaven as two *separate* persons. As Hong explained in his annotations to Mark 12:35–37,

> If they insist on the mistaken interpretation that Christ is Shangdi and that he ascended to heaven where the two became united as one … why is it that when I ascended to heaven I saw in heaven the Heavenly Father Shangdi and the Heavenly Mother (my mother), and also the Elder Brother Christ and the Heavenly Elder Sister-in-law?[74]

From Hong's perspective, the orthodox belief that the Heavenly Father and Jesus were united as one God contradicted his revelation of 1837. Hong's fear of invalidating his revelation contributed, in other words, to the denial of Jesus' divinity in the Taipings' doctrine of God. The missionaries used the Chalcedonian definition as their criterion of correctness, but the Taipings judged the truth of a doctrine by its conformity to the visions on which Hong's identity and authority were based.[75]

The Taipings, as we saw in the previous chapter, legitimized their new religion by associating the biblical God with the classical deity of China, Shangdi. That association not only enabled the Taipings to emphasize the "Chinese" (as opposed to entirely foreign) character of their Christian God, but also encouraged them to view that God as an independent and unitary deity. The classical Shangdi was not the Trinitarian God who existed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but a singular deity who acted

as the "ruler of the people below" (*xiamin zhi bi*).[76] As the ruling deity, Shangdi "conferred on the people a moral sense," rewarded their good deeds with numerous blessings, and punished their acts of evil with all kinds of calamities.[77] Shangdi also nourished human life and, as the provider of the Heavenly Mandate (*Tianming*), appointed and removed the various rulers of the world.[78] Although the Taipings' religious publications contained only a few explicit references to the classics, their descriptions of God's activities in the world (universal ruler, nourisher of humankind, provider of blessings, punisher of evil, appointer of kings) show that the central characteristics of their deity reflected those of the classical Shangdi no less than those of the biblical Father. The reason for this functional overlap was the Taipings' discourse that they were *restoring* the Chinese people's ancient worship of God. If that discourse was to have any credibility, then the Taipings' new Christian God would have to take on some of the core attributes (including, most importantly, absolute oneness) of the ancient and classical Shangdi. The Taipings' restorationist vision of world salvation inclined them, in short, to view Shangdi/Shen (the terms used by missionaries and Liang to designate the Trinitarian God) as a singular deity consisting of the Heavenly Father alone.[79]

The Taipings' vision of world salvation also declared that the sources of spiritual ignorance in China were demonic idols and false gods that had usurped the position of Shangdi historically. That conviction allowed the Taipings to depict Hong as the divinely ordained slayer of demons, but at the same time it predisposed them to view both Jesus and Hong as non-divine beings. The Taipings believed that elevating either Jesus or Hong to the level of God would have contradicted the claim that they were destroying the usurpers of Shangdi's position in China, showing that they were actually guilty of the same crime as their demonic adversaries. Confirmation of this link between the Taipings' soteriological vision and their denial of Jesus' divinity can be found in one of Hong's pre-rebellion texts, the *Second Exhortation*. Before stating that Jesus was to be addressed as Lord (Zhu) and not God (Di), Hong referred to the "idols" (*ouxiang*) of China that had taken the place of Shangdi for approximately two thousand years:

> As for all those nameless and poison-swollen ones [idols], they are all demonic followers and devilish servants of the square-headed and red-eyed Serpent Devil, the Demon of Hades. From Qin and Han down to the present, a period of one or two thousand years, how many people's souls have been captured and destroyed by this Demon of Hades.[80]

The proximity of this extract on the history of demonic usurpers to a statement prohibiting the application of the title Di to Jesus confirms that the Taipings' vision of world salvation was the theological basis for their denial of Jesus' divinity. Hong, a religious leader whose revolutionary mission was to overthrow the usurpers of God's position in China, would have lost all credibility if he had proclaimed himself or any other being an equal of Shangdi. Doing so would have revealed not his exalted status and spiritual authority, but that he had fallen into the same self-glorifying trap as the idols and popular deities that had wrongfully taken the place of God for two thousand years.

Hong's annotations to the New Testament highlight even more explicitly the link between his vision of world salvation and the belief that he and Jesus were non-divine beings. In his notes on 1 John 5:7, Hong pointed to the second commandment (according to the Taipings' numeration and commentaries) to explain why he and Jesus were so reluctant to take on the status of God:

> The Heavenly Father Shangdi alone is the one true God, the one Holy God. Shangdi says, "Besides me you shall have no other deities [*shen*], no other gods [*di*]." … If we mistakenly explain that Christ is Shangdi, then we have another God [Di]. What peace of mind could this bring to the Elder Brother? Now the Elder Brother has descended into the world and has issued a sacred edict for my instruction, saying, "Xiuquan, my natural younger brother [*baodi*], later you must not proclaim yourself God [Di]. Our Father alone is God [Di]."[81]

Like his reference to the history of demon-induced ignorance in the *Second Exhortation*, these annotations show that Hong's denial of Jesus' divinity was firmly rooted in his soteriological mission to destroy the usurpers of God's position in China. The second commandment, as we saw in Chapter 3, encouraged Hong to recognize idols and popular gods as the demonic sources of spiritual ignorance in China. His annotations to 1 John 5:7 reveal that it also encouraged him to see the divinity of Jesus as an idolatrous doctrine that violated biblical law and prevented the true and exclusive worship of Shangdi. Significantly, Hong's claims about Jesus' anxiety and active opposition to the doctrine show that he attributed the confusion to an interpretive error, rather than any blasphemous intention on the part of Jesus. Such ideas enabled Hong to distinguish Jesus from the real (intentional) usurpers of God's position and thereby maintain the internal consistency of his own soteriological narrative.

A Hero's Return to the Truth further confirms the link between the Taipings' vision of world salvation (in particular, the idea that they were destroying the usurpers of Shangdi's position in China) and their conception of Jesus as a non-divine being. Discussing the Heavenly King's refusal to take the imperial title Di, Hong Rengan declared that the previous emperors of China had blasphemously "usurped" (*jian*) the position and title of God. Qin Shi Huang, the first Chinese ruler to adopt the imperial title *huangdi*, was singled out for particular criticism by Hong: "Zheng of Qin, in his ridiculous arrogance, usurped the great title of the Supreme Lord, the Great Shangdi. No wonder his affairs were in a mess and his years on the throne were few."[82] Hong also explained that Qin Shi Huang and subsequent usurpers of the divine title Di had encouraged the Chinese people to worship "evil demons" (*xiegui*), setting up idolatrous temples for the veneration of mountains, rivers, and sages.[83] The Taipings, as these claims illustrate, saw the first Qin emperor's usurpation of the divine title Di as the starting point for the spread of idolatrous ignorance in China. Hong Xiuquan's insistence that he and Jesus were non-divine beings who were prohibited from using the titles of God confirmed, therefore, that he was tackling China's spiritual problem at its root.

The Taipings' vision of world salvation, which associated the Christian God with the classical deity and condemned the demons that had usurped his position historically, was the principal factor behind their monotheistic conception of God. Another major source of inspiration for the Taipings' theological doctrine was the third commandment, which was recorded by the Taipings in the *Book of Heavenly Commandments*: "Do not take the name of the Great Shangdi in vain. The name of the Great Shangdi is Jehovah [Yehuohua], which people must not take in vain."[84] Although the Chinese Bible's explanation of the third commandment (Exodus 20:7) only mentioned the divine title Shangdi, Liang's *Good Words* had frequently referred to the Christian deity as God Jehovah (Shen Yehuohua).[85] Those many references to the Hebrew name of God in Liang's work explain why the Taipings' record of the third commandment prohibited the misuse of both Shangdi and Jehovah.

Evidence of the third commandment's influence on the Taipings' thinking about God is not restricted to the *Book of Heavenly Commandments*. The Taipings' pre-rebellion writings had, in fact, already asserted that the divine titles Shangdi and Jehovah belonged to the Heavenly Father alone. They also offered typical examples of blasphemies against those titles. On the first title Shangdi, Hong's *Second Exhortation* claimed,

> When Hui of Song [Song Huizong, r. 1100–26] appeared, he changed the appellation of the Great Shangdi to the Great Jade Emperor, God of the Golden Palace of the Luminous Heaven.... To call him the Great Jade Emperor is indeed the worst kind of blasphemy against the Great Shangdi.[86]

Hong thus believed that using the character *di*, as the Daoist Jade Emperor (Yuhuang Da*di*) had done, was a blasphemy against the name of God, Shangdi. That belief, which stemmed from Hong's reading of the third commandment, not only inspired his early critique of the imperial office, but also lay behind his formal announcement (in the *Second Exhortation* and the proclamation of December 1851) that neither he nor Jesus could be addressed as God. The biblical prohibition on misusing the divine title Shangdi contributed, in other words, to the monotheistic doctrine that denied the divinity of Jesus. The prohibition reinforced Hong's belief, based on his soteriological vision, that the Heavenly Father alone was God and that his unique status had to be constantly protected against the threat of usurpers.

The *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle* offers further evidence of the third commandment's contribution to the Taipings' doctrine of God. That book, in its discussion of Hong's ascension to heaven in 1837, explained that God had changed his previously used name (Huoxiu) so as to avoid any offense against the divine title Jehovah (Yehuohua):

> The Heavenly Father, the Supreme Lord and Great Shangdi, commanded the Lord, saying, "Your given name is Quan. When you were formerly in the world, the first character of your name violated [the taboo on] my name, and should be done away with. When you go down into the world, you may call yourself Hong Xiu, or you may call yourself Hong Quan, or you may call yourself Hong Xiuquan."[87]

Hong, as the above extract demonstrates, believed that the first character of his former name (*huo*) violated the taboo on the divine title Ye*huo*hua. The subsequent deletion of that character from Hong's name confirms that the Taipings' main priority, inspired by their soteriological vision and the Christian Decalogue, was to protect the unique position and titles of the Heavenly Father Shangdi. It also reveals that the Taipings applied the imperial custom of making each character of the ruler's name taboo to the Christian God.[88] Whereas Christian missionaries saw the complete name of God as a sacred word that needed to be treated with respect, the Taipings believed that the individual characters from the divine titles (Shang-di, Ye-huo-hua) belonged to the Heavenly Father alone and could

not be used by the people of the world.[89] Applying those divine characters (and the status of God that they signified) to either Jesus or Hong would have rendered the Taipings, from their commandment-centered perspective, violators of divine law and usurpers of Shangdi's position.

The Taipings' vision of world salvation and the third commandment both contributed to their highly monotheistic conception of God. Those sources of inspiration for the Taipings' monotheistic perspective do not, however, explain the most unique feature of their doctrine of God: namely, the hierarchical relationship between the Heavenly Father, Jesus, and Hong. Discourses on the various divine titles (for example, Supreme [Shang] and God [Di]) highlighted the pre-eminent position of the Heavenly Father among the three. The claim that only he and Jesus could be addressed as "holy" (*sheng*) revealed, furthermore, the superior status of the Heavenly Elder Brother over his younger sibling Hong. This hierarchical ordering of the Heavenly Father, the Heavenly Elder Brother, and the Heavenly King was also expressed by the Taipings on the pages of their religious publications. Whereas Protestant missionaries saw no issue in placing the names of the Heavenly Father and Jesus on the same level (as they were *equal* members of the Godhead in their theology; see Figure 4.1), the Taipings

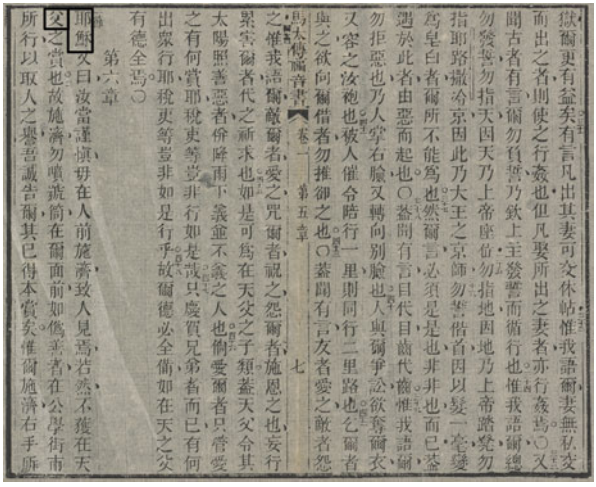

Fig. 4.1 This extract from the Gospel of Matthew (Taiping reprint of the Gützlaff version, 1853) shows that the Chinese Bible received by Hong did not raise the names of the Father (Fu) and Jesus (Yesu) above the main text

believed that such writing practices blurred the essential distinction in status between the two. Thus, whenever the names of God, Jesus, and Hong appeared in an official Taiping document, the scribe would start a new line that was raised (Chinese scribes, unlike those of Western countries, wrote vertically) three levels above the main text in the case of the Heavenly Father, two levels in the case of Jesus, and one level in the case of Hong (see Figures 4.2 and 4.3).[90] This alternative, status-affirming practice of raising official titles was, like the taboo on the individual characters of God's name, derived from an imperial custom. In order to demonstrate their loyalty to the ruling emperor, memorialists would place his reign name clearly above the main text and the names of other significant officials.[91] The key difference between such memorials and the books of the Taipings is that the latter used the technique of raising names to emphasize not only the exalted status of the ruler, but also the duty of the people to acknowledge and obey a spiritual being whose authority exceeded that of earthly kings.

The construction of a heavenly hierarchy (Father, Elder Brother, and King) shows that Hong interpreted God's relation to his sons through

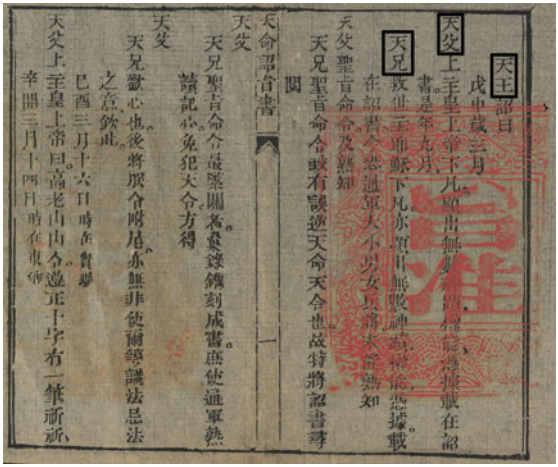

Fig. 4.2 This extract from the *Book of Heavenly Decrees and Proclamations* demonstrates that Hong (author of this edict) did not believe himself to be the equal of Jesus. The title of the Heavenly King (Tianwang) is placed one level below that of the Heavenly Elder Brother (Tianxiong) and two levels below that of the Heavenly Father (Tianfu), indicating a hierarchical relationship between God, Jesus, and Hong

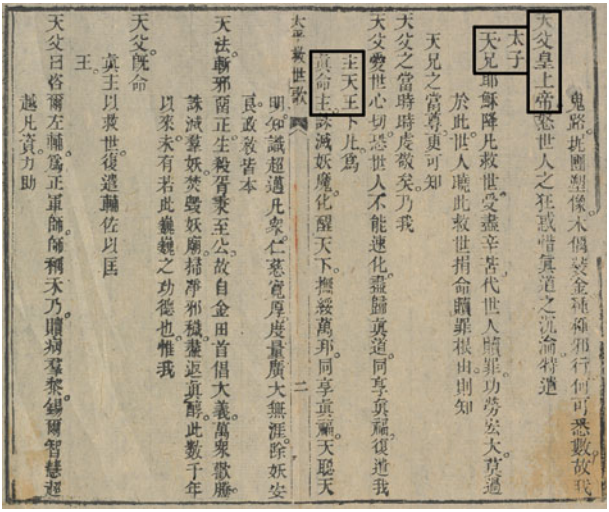

Fig. 4.3 An extract from the *Taiping Songs on World Salvation* in which the title of the Heavenly Father (Tianfu Huang Shangdi, "Heavenly Father and Great Shangdi") is placed one level above those of Jesus (Taizi, "Crown Prince"; Tianxiong, "Heavenly Elder Brother") and two levels above those of Hong (Zhu Tianwang, "Lord and Heavenly King"; *zhenming Zhu*, "true ordained Lord")

the Confucian doctrine of the five relationships (*wulun*). That doctrine, one of the basic components of China's Confucian ethical orthodoxy, taught that social order was maintained when (1) ministers loyally served their sovereign, (2) sons revered their fathers, (3) younger brothers respected their elder brothers, (4) wives obeyed their husbands, and (5) friends were mutually faithful.[92] These various relationships, with the exception of the fifth, promoted a social system that was characterized by age- and gender-based status distinctions. The application of this socio-political doctrine to a theological issue might appear strange on the surface, but we need to remember that the Chinese Bible and Liang's *Good Words* presented God and Jesus to the Taipings not as abstract spiritual entities, but in the familial language of "father" (*fu*) and "son" (*zi*). Hong's identity as a son of God thus brought him into a filial relationship with the Heavenly Father and a fraternal relationship with Jesus (his Heavenly Elder Brother, Tian*xiong*). Embracing the maxim of the *Classic of Filial*

Piety (*Xiao jing*) that all "sons" (*zi*) should revere their "fathers" (*fu*) and all "younger brothers" (*di*) should respect their "elder brothers" (*xiong*), Hong depicted the Heavenly Father as the supreme and most dignified member of the heavenly family and his eldest son Jesus as the Crown Prince and highest in rank of all his children (and all other non-divine beings by extension).[93] Hong, in other words, acknowledged the superiority of both the Heavenly Father and the Heavenly Elder Brother over himself. The idea that a son could be the equal of his father (or a younger brother the equal of his elder brother) was, from Hong's Confucianized perspective, a violation of proper relationships.

The Taipings' acceptance of the five relationships and age-based status distinctions can be seen in various extracts from their official publications. Focusing on the moral duties of siblings, the *Taiping Songs on World Salvation* declared, "In fraternal principles a younger brother must be well versed. He serves the elder brother with reverence, as in duty he is bound to do."[94] The *Poems for the Young* (*Youxue shi*; 1851)—one of the Taipings' main instructional books for children—similarly asserted that "the way to follow elder brothers lies in respect."[95] The book also extended this principle of respect to the wives of siblings, claiming that harmony was realized when the wives of younger brothers honored the "elder brothers" (*zhangge*) and yielded to their wives (*sao*) in all matters.[96] Another relevant passage, which refers directly to three of the five classical relationships, lies in the *Poems of the Heavenly Father* (*Tianfu shi*; 1857):

> A son who does not revere his father violates the natural relationships. A younger brother who does not revere his elder brother violates the natural relationships. A minister who does not revere his sovereign violates the natural relationships. An inferior who does not revere his superior violates the natural relationships.[97]

The final sentence of this extract confirms that Hong, because of his cultural and educational background, saw age as a key determinant of status. Sons and younger brothers, as the younger parties in two of the five classical relationships, were *naturally inferior* to fathers and elder brothers.

The *Taiping Ceremonial Regulations* (*Taiping lizhi*; 1852) further demonstrates that Hong and his followers associated age with status. That book, which was published prior to the capture of Nanjing, specified the various titles by which Taiping officials and their relatives were to be addressed. A father-in-law of the Eastern King Yang Xiuqing, being related to the

highest-ranked Taiping prince, was to be addressed by all of the other Taiping princes' fathers-in-law (for example, those of the Southern King Feng Yunshan) as the "noble elder brother related to the Eastern King."[98] However, the book explained that when any of the princes' fathers-in-law (including those of Yang) encountered one of Hong's fathers-in-law, "the royal father-in-law shall be considered the elder brother [*xiong*] and the noble fathers-in-law shall be considered younger brothers [*di*]."[99] The Taipings, as we can see from these extracts, used the age-related labels of elder brother and younger brother to communicate rank and distinctions of status within the Heavenly Kingdom. That association of age with status suggests, furthermore, that the hierarchical ordering of God, Jesus, and Hong in Taiping publications (and the distinctions of status that it implied) was due to their relative positions as father, elder brother, and younger brother. The labels of *fu*, *xiong*, and *di* were not apolitical indicators of age for the Taipings, but powerful status signifiers.

Taipings and Missionaries: Different Theological Priorities

This chapter has shown that the Taipings' doctrine of God represents a major example of localized Christianity in their theological worldview. That localized doctrine, which described Shangdi as a corporeal and singular deity, was shaped by both popular and classical cultural influences. Firstly, the anthropomorphic image of Shangdi confirms that the Taipings localized the Christian God through the symbolism and conventions of Chinese popular religion. In giving the Heavenly Father a physical body and a female consort, the Taipings ensured that their newfound God looked and lived like the popular deities that they sought to obliterate in their iconoclastic campaigns. Secondly, the Taipings' statements on the unitary nature of Shangdi highlight the contribution of classical ideas to their understanding of God. Inspired by Hong's revelation, their vision of world salvation, and the third commandment, the Taipings repeatedly asserted in their books that the Heavenly Father alone was God. That strong belief in the oneness of God also underlay their reinterpretation of Jesus' identity. As the literal and first-born son of God, Jesus was the greatest of all human beings and enjoyed an intimacy with the Heavenly Father that was experienced by no other person on earth. But he was still only a human being and thus *subordinate* to the fully divine and infinitely high Shangdi. This highly monotheistic conception of God, which

depicted Shangdi as a singular deity in *person* (Heavenly Father) and not only in *substance*, shows that the overlap between the Taiping and classical deities went far beyond their mutual name.

The Taipings' monotheistic doctrine of God also highlights the different theological priorities of the Taipings and their missionary critics. The Taipings' main priority, determined by their soteriological vision, was to protect the oneness and uniqueness of the Heavenly Father Shangdi, as opposed to the divinity of Jesus or the triune nature of the Godhead. Their discourse on the history of idols and false gods usurping the position of Shangdi in China made them extremely sensitive to the possibility of individuals falsely assuming the identity and titles of God. That sensitivity manifested itself not only in the Taipings' conviction that the Chinese emperor was a usurper of God's title (Di), but also in their belief that Jesus was a non-divine being who was ontologically distinct from the Heavenly Father. Many of the Taipings' critics assumed that Hong—the self-proclaimed second son of God—was blasphemously incorporating himself into the Godhead, but the reality is that his soteriological vision (reinforced by the third commandment) compelled him to deny the idea that he and Jesus, as sons of God, were divine. This observation shows that we can only fully understand the Taipings' beliefs about God and his sons if we analyze them within the Taipings' wider theological worldview. Disconnecting those beliefs from that worldview, and analyzing them through an external standard of orthodoxy, leads only to essentialist judgments (heterodox, blasphemous, pseudo-Christian) that conceal the complex theological considerations from which the Taipings' *localized* doctrine of God emerged.

The Taipings' lack of commitment to the alien orthodoxy of the missionaries facilitated not only their highly monotheistic doctrine of God, but also their new interpretation of God's relation to his sons. According to the Taipings, the Heavenly Father was the sole divine being and thus superior in status to his two sons, Jesus and Hong. The Taipings expressed that superiority not only by reserving specific titles for the Heavenly Father, but also by elevating his name above those of Jesus and Hong in their official publications. The relationship of Jesus and Hong was similarly characterized by status distinction, with the Heavenly Elder Brother—as the Crown Prince (Taizi) and the only non-divine person allowed to be addressed as "holy" (*sheng*)—occupying a more prominent position in the heavenly family than his younger sibling Hong. This hierarchical classification of God and his two sons highlights, as the final part of the analysis suggested, the localization of Christian symbols (namely, the Father and Jesus) via the

Confucian doctrine of the five relationships, which determined the relative statuses and duties of individuals within the family according to their age and gender. The Chinese Bible and Liang's *Good Words* had provided the terminological triggers (*fu*, "father"; *zi*, "son") for that localized interpretation of God's relation to his sons, but it could only have emerged in a world that acknowledged a truth greater than the doctrine that three *equal* divine persons constitute one God. The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, founded on the revelations of Hong and his mission to restore the God of ancient China, was one such world.

The theology of Yang Tingyun, a Confucian scholar who converted to Christianity in the early seventeenth century, shows that Hong was not the first Chinese Christian to construct a Confucianized doctrine of God. Yang's theology was a direct response to Matteo Ricci's claim that the Christian God was synonymous with the classical deity Shangdi. Like Hong, Yang asserted that his newfound God was the deity of ancient China and condemned Buddhism and Daoism for distorting the Chinese people's consciousness of God/Heaven.[100] Yang's religious writings also stressed that God was an omnipotent Lord who created the universe and acted as the Great Father-Mother (Dafumu) of humankind.[101] These ideas highlight some of the overlaps between the theologies of Yang and Hong, showing that Hong's monotheistic doctrine was not an irrational and entirely unprecedented response to the divine title Shangdi. However, the theologies of Yang and Hong are fundamentally opposed on the question of the Trinity. Despite describing the Trinity as a mysterious doctrine that could only be explained through transliterated concepts, Yang's writings show that he acknowledged both the divinity of Jesus and the triune nature of the Godhead.[102] Yang's acceptance of these orthodox ideas confirms, among other things, the theological significance of Hong's disconnection from the missionary community.[103] Yang and Hong (as classically trained scholars) would have experienced similar doubts regarding the Trinity, but Hong alone was free to reject the orthodox tradition and the specific idea that the *classical* deity consisted of three persons.

Finally, the analysis of this chapter suggests that abandoning essentialized definitions of Christianity can enhance our understanding of the relationship between language and culture, or vernacularization and localization, in the era of global Protestant missions. By carefully analyzing the meaning of Hong's identity as son of God, rather than dismissing it as evidence of heterodoxy or theological corruption, this chapter has identified a new localized doctrine of God that was shaped by concepts and values

from the Chinese classics. Significantly, that localized theology was not a random product of Hong's "heterodox" mind, but a response to terms from the Chinese Christian literature (Shangdi, *fu*, *zi*) that connected the Christian religion to the cultural world of Confucianism. It is hardly surprising that Hong, an individual who had studied the classics from childhood, recognized and developed those text-world overlaps in his new theology. Nor is it surprising that Protestant missionaries, who believed that they were transmitting a universal form of Christianity to China, overlooked those overlaps in their discussions of Hong's beliefs. Recognizing them would not only have challenged the missionaries' views about the universality of orthodoxy, but would also have suggested that their work in translating Christian texts was partly responsible for the emergence of Hong's "deviant" belief system.

CHAPTER 5

A Confucianized Christian Ethic

The Chinese classics made a significant contribution to the development of Hong's localized theological worldview. The classical deity (Shangdi) and Confucian social ideals heavily influenced the Taipings' vision of world salvation, while the doctrine of the five relationships appears to have shaped their understanding of the Heavenly Father's relation to his sons. Turning to another example of Confucianized Christianity, this chapter will examine the contribution of classical texts and values to the Taipings' ethical system. The Taipings' moral code was a key component of their religious world, uniting all of Hong's followers under a strictly enforced system of behavioral rules. Hong and other Taiping leaders used their new moral code not only to define the external qualities of a true God worshipper, but also to discipline soldiers and ordinary civilians within the Heavenly Kingdom.

The analysis of this chapter will focus on the Taipings' conception of human nature and their belief that obedience to the Heavenly Commandments was the basis of a morally upright life. The discussion of those ideas will show that although the Taipings adopted an unmistakably Christian (commandment-centered) ethic, they articulated their new moral obligations within an ethical framework that was shaped by the assumptions and discourses of Confucian moral philosophy. The final section on the Taipings' ideas about obedience (to God, sovereign, and parents) will further confirm that they proclaimed a Christian ethic with a Confucian moral focus. The analysis of that section will also reveal that the Taipings created a radically original, theocentric doctrine of filial reverence and loyalty.

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Confucius Kneels Before Jesus: The Anti-Confucian Rhetoric of the Taipings

Before looking at how the Taipings constructed a localized, or Confucianized, Christian ethic, we need to consider the anti-Confucian rhetoric in one of their most significant publications, the *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle*. Acknowledging and discussing the Taipings' open attack on Confucianism will help us to understand both the nature of their Confucianized Christian ethic and its significance vis-à-vis the wider localization process. By articulating their new Christian ethic through a tradition that they overtly condemned, Hong and other Taipings writers show that the localization of Christianity is not *always* linked to a conscious attempt to retain an indigenous (in this case, Confucian) cultural identity.

Hong's early religious texts, which were written three years before the anti-Confucian *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle*, offered a favorable interpretation of Confucius and his teachings. In his *Ode on the Hundred Upright Things* (*Baizheng ge*; 1844–45), Hong declared that Confucius converted the morally depraved through upright teachings: "Confucius converted three thousand [students] to his teachings, because he converted the incorrect with uprightness."[1] His *Ode on the Origin of the Way* (1845) also praised Confucius for setting his mind on non-material matters: "Confucius and Yan Hui were happy on water and thin gruel. Knowing their fate, they were content in poverty, and their spirits soared."[2] The same text concluded that the soul of the morally upright Confucius was allowed to "advance and retreat in the presence of God."[3] In claiming that Confucius' soul enjoyed the presence of God in heaven, Hong suggested that his conduct and teachings perfectly reflected the will of the Heavenly Father.

The reverential image of Confucius in Hong's early religious texts was completely overturned by the *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle*, the book that described Hong's ascension to heaven in 1837. That book offered a two-pronged attack on Confucianism, focusing on its canonical books and the specific teachings of Confucius. Setting up the first attack, the Heavenly Father showed Hong the Old and New Testaments and announced that they were "true and without error."[4] He then turned to the Confucian classics and told Hong that they contained "extremely numerous errors and faults, so that even you were harmed by studying them."[5] Hong thus learned from the Heavenly Father that the Chinese classics were not a valuable collection of ancient moral texts, but a set of unholy and erroneous books that harmed the people of the world. Hong was using the voice

of the Heavenly Father, in other words, to set up the Christian Bible as the new orthodox text of China.

Besides condemning the Chinese classics, the Heavenly Father criticized Confucius for misleading the people and encouraging their spiritual ignorance. Interrogating Confucius in heaven, God asked, "Why did you teach people to carry on their affairs in such a confused manner, to the point that the people of the world do not recognize me and your reputation on the contrary is greater than mine?"[6] After hearing the accusations of the Heavenly Father and Jesus, Confucius made a desperate attempt to escape from heaven. However, the Heavenly Father quickly dispatched Hong to catch the fugitive philosopher and return him to heaven for punishment. Hong offered a vivid description of the punishment that followed:

> The Heavenly Father, the Supreme Lord and Great Shangdi, in great anger, ordered the angels to lash him. Confucius knelt before the Heavenly Elder Brother Christ, and repeatedly begged for mercy. He was given many lashes, and Confucius' sad pleas were unceasing.[7]

After Confucius had received his lashing, the Heavenly Father decided to spare him on the grounds that his "meritorious achievements compensated for his deficiencies." He permitted Confucius to enjoy the blessings of heaven (thus confirming the claim of Hong's earlier text), but declared that he would never again be allowed to descend into the world.[8]

The shift in Hong's attitude toward Confucius/Confucianism from his earliest texts (1844–45) to the *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle* (1848) can be interpreted in various ways. The most obvious, but least convincing, explanation is that Hong was rebelling against the orthodox culture that had rendered him a failure at four separate examinations. A second interpretation is that the ambivalence simply signifies Hong's personal struggle to make sense of his identity as an aspiring Confucian scholar following his conversion to Christianity. This explanation, unlike the first, can account for the fact that Hong's earliest texts—written shortly after his final examination failure—praised Confucius and his classical teachings. However, the most plausible explanation is that Hong saw the condemnation of Confucianism as a way to strengthen the authority of the Christian deity and scriptures at Guangxi. In praising the faultless Bible, condemning the erroneous classics, and criticizing Confucius for having a greater reputation than God, the *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle* suggests that Hong and his closest followers viewed Confucius and the classics—possibly in response

to religious persecution or unsuccessful attempts to convert educated elements—as a serious threat to the authority of God and the Bible. Once Hong had identified that threat, he was bound to abandon his original position and condemn the great teacher (together with all other idols and false gods) for taking the place of Shangdi and encouraging the spiritual ignorance of the Chinese people.

Whether due to inner conflicts or a pragmatic judgment about cultural authority, Hong had formally repudiated Confucianism by 1848. The Taipings' Confucianized Christian ethic was not, therefore, the product of a formal policy to uphold China's ethical orthodoxy alongside their newly acquired Christian beliefs. As we shall see in the remainder of this chapter, localization was simply the result of Hong and his associates processing and articulating their new moral values through a familiar ethical framework. The deep influence of that ethical framework on the thinking of Hong (a classically trained scholar) and his associates explains why Confucianism continued to shape Taiping thought after the denunciation of the tradition in 1848.

"Uprightness Is the Original Nature of Humankind"

The doctrine of original sin, which was embraced by most Protestant denominations at the time of the Taiping Rebellion, taught that human nature had been permanently corrupted by Adam's original act of disobedience to the will of God (Genesis 3). The Church of England offered a particularly clear exposition of the doctrine in its Thirty-Nine Articles (1571), which were later adopted (in revised form) by the American Episcopal Church in 1801. Article IX ("Of Original or Birth Sin") declared that original sin was "the fault and corruption of the Nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam."[9] Due to this "infection of nature," which remained even in those who were morally regenerated, human beings were naturally and irreversibly "inclined to evil."[10] This idea that human nature was inherently flawed provided the anthropological basis for the Anselmian doctrine of salvation (discussed in Chapter 4). Since humankind was naturally "inclined to evil," an ordinary human being was incapable of making the perfectly righteous offering that was required to reconcile God and fallen humankind. The responsibility thus fell to the God-man Jesus Christ, who was, as the fully divine Son of God, exempt from the stain of Adam's sin.[11]

Reflecting the importance of the fall in most Protestant soteriologies, Liang's *Good Words* began with a discussion of Genesis 3. Liang incorporated the full biblical chapter for his readers, highlighting the Serpent Devil's (Shemo) tempting Eve, her and Adam's eating the fruit from the tree of knowledge, and the subsequent expulsion of the two from the Garden of Eden.[12] Liang, in his comments on the chapter, also drew attention to the emergence of evil and suffering in the world following the fall of Adam:

> Alas, it is a shame that the original man and woman momentarily lapsed and were enticed by the Devil. Evil was thus born, greed suddenly appeared, and the great laws of the Heavenly Commandments were not observed, causing every kind of suffering to enter the world.[13]

Toward the end of his comments on Genesis 3, Liang introduced the idea that the original disobedience of Adam had permanently corrupted or infected human nature. As every fetus was created in lust, he explained, "the people of the world possess the root of an evil nature [*exing*] as soon as they emerge from the womb."[14] The articulation of such ideas in *Good Words* confirms that Liang had embraced the pessimistic anthropological assumptions of his Protestant instructors. Human nature, according to Liang, was fundamentally evil from birth.

The foundation of the Taipings' ethical system, unlike that of the Protestant missionaries and Liang, was the assumption that human nature was originally good. One of Hong's early religious works, *An Ode on the Hundred Upright Things*, shows his rejection of Liang's pessimistic ideas about human nature in favor of a more optimistic anthropology. According to Hong's analysis, human nature was characterized not by "evil" (*e*), but by "uprightness" (*zheng*). It was this inherent quality, furthermore, that separated humankind from animals: "Uprightness distinguishes people from animals. Uprightness has been revered from antiquity to the present. Uprightness in heaven's nobility is most honored. Uprightness is the original nature of humankind."[15] Dismissing the idea that humans were intrinsically flawed, Hong in this extract affirmed that the "original nature" (*benxing*) of humankind was fundamentally good. This optimistic anthropology suggested that people who protected and followed their original natures would be righteous before God.

The problem, as Hong explained in his other religious writings, was that demons had corrupted the people of the world and caused them to lose their "original hearts" (*benxin*).[16] Thus believing that environmental

forces could undermine—and even invert—the goodness of human nature, the Taipings repeatedly exhorted their followers to strengthen their hearts through self-cultivation. Many of the Taipings' official books discussed the duty of the people to "temper" (*molian*) themselves and "cultivate uprightness" (*lian zheng*).[17] The *Three Character Classic*, for example, declared, "You must cultivate uprightness. Do not be depraved in heart. The Great Shangdi constantly surveys you. You must cultivate goodness. Do not cultivate depravity."[18] Similarly, the *Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature* urged its readers to "cast off evil and follow uprightness [*qu xie cong zheng*], return to simplicity and purity, practice self-cultivation and become human beings, and together return to the true Way."[19] This extract suggested that people who refined their moral characters through self-discipline would be able to resist the corrupting influence of evil demons, protect or restore their original hearts, and realize the quality of uprightness that characterized a true human being.

The Taipings believed that human nature was originally upright, but that individuals needed to refine their moral characters in order to overcome environmental sources of corruption. These beliefs, which departed from the doctrine of original sin in Liang's *Good Words*, show that the foundational assumptions of the Taipings' ethical system were derived from Confucian thought. Firstly, the Chinese classics promoted an optimistic view of human nature. The *Doctrine of the Mean*, one of the Four Books that Hong would have studied in preparation for the civil service examinations, opened with the following statement: "What Heaven has conferred is called the nature. To follow this nature is called the Way."[20] The *Mencius*, another classical text that Hong would have studied, used a memorable water analogy to convey the goodness of human nature: "The tendency of human nature to good is like the tendency of water to flow downwards. All people have this tendency to good, just as all water flows downwards."[21] The *Mencius* even asserted that four of the five constant virtues (namely, benevolence [*ren*], righteousness [*yi*], propriety [*li*], and wisdom [*zhi*]) were innate and "not infused into us from outside."[22] Hong's exposure to this optimistic anthropology explains why he, despite embracing the religious worldview of Liang's Christian book, continued to proclaim that "uprightness is the original nature of humankind."

Classical ideas about self-cultivation and the rectification of the heart also inspired the moral discourses of the Taipings. Despite affirming the original goodness of human nature, the Chinese classics acknowledged that environmental forces could affect the extent to which an individual

realized their natural *potential*. Using the example of cultivating barley to highlight the relationship between nature and environment, the *Mencius* asserted that inequalities of produce were due to variations in soil quality, nourishment, and human effort, rather than the inherent character of the seeds.[23] This analogy implied that people needed to avoid environmental sources of corruption and constantly "nourish" (*yang*) the seeds of goodness within themselves. Viewing material objects that enticed and obscured the senses as the primary sources of moral corruption, the *Mencius* declared that the most effective method of self-cultivation was to reduce one's personal desires.[24] The *Great Learning* (*Daxue*) stressed the importance of a disciplined mind to this kind of self-cultivation, claiming that those who wished to "cultivate their persons" would firstly "rectify [*zheng*] their hearts."[25] Only those with rectified hearts would be able to regulate their senses and thereby prevent environmental forces from polluting their inherently good natures.[26] Such classical discourses, rather than the moral exhortations of the Chinese Christian literature, underlay the Taipings' belief that "cultivating uprightness" (*lian zheng*) was the way to realize one's original nature and become a true human being.

Although the attack on Confucius in the *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle* suggests that the Taipings were an anti-Confucian movement, the analysis above has shown that the foundational assumptions of their ethical system were derived from the Chinese classics. The Taipings believed—like many of the great Neo-Confucian philosophers—that human nature was originally good and that it was the duty of each individual to overcome environmental and inner sources of corruption by practicing self-cultivation.[27] Whereas Liang had accepted the doctrine of the missionaries that all people were born evil following the fall, Hong appears to have clung to the Confucian idea that humans were perfectible through self-cultivation.

The Heavenly Commandments: The Laws of the Upright

Hong adopted the classical anthropology in associating human nature with uprightness (*zheng*). His precise understanding of an upright life was, however, derived from the Chinese Christian literature, and not the Confucian classics. According to the Taipings, the Ten Commandments were the essential moral laws that a self-cultivating individual had to follow in order to become an upright person. The Taipings thus proclaimed

a new Christian means of attaining the established ethical goal of moral rectification. As Hong's God-given mission was to "exterminate the evil and preserve the *upright*," the adoption of this new biblical method of self-cultivation was what distinguished the elect of the Heavenly Kingdom from their demonic enemies outside.

The moral transformation of the world was a dominant theme in Hong's early religious writings (1844–47). The revolution of values that Hong had in mind was based not only on Confucian ideals such as harmony and Great Unity (see Chapter 3), but also on the prohibitive laws of the Christian Decalogue. In his *Ode on the Origin of the Way*, Hong asserted that "Shangdi should be worshipped" and instructed the people to repay the grace of Heaven by refusing to worship false gods and acting like "upright people" (*zhengren*).[28] The remainder of the text discussed six moral crimes—in addition to the worship of false gods—that the "upright person" would avoid:

> The first and chief kind of incorrectness is licentiousness.... The second kind of incorrectness is disobedience to parents.... The third kind of incorrectness is to kill.... The fourth kind of incorrectness is robbery.... The fifth kind of incorrectness is witchcraft.... The sixth kind of incorrectness is gambling.[29]

The above extracts show that Hong, in one of his earliest works, implicitly acknowledged the Ten Commandments as the moral code of the upright person. Hong not only prescribed the worship of Shangdi and the honoring of one's parents, but also condemned the worship of false gods, murder, licentiousness, and theft. If we take the fifth (witchcraft) and sixth (gambling) kinds of incorrectness as archetypal examples of falsehood and covetousness, then the laws on the name of God (third commandment) and the Sabbath (fourth commandment) are the only commandments missing from the text.[30] Although Hong did not refer to the Bible explicitly, the virtues and vices that he identified suggest that his ethical thinking had been fundamentally shaped by the Christian Decalogue.

The composition date of Hong's *Ode on the Origin of the Way* (1845, two years before his stay with Roberts) suggests that Liang's *Good Words* was the source of his early knowledge of Christian moral laws. Several passages from Liang's book may have directly inspired Hong's new ethical system and his law-focused discourse on incorrectness in particular. In a chapter on the spiritual weaknesses of the rich, Liang, quoting a moral

pronouncement from the Gospel of Matthew (19:18–19), summarized the core commandments (*jie*) of the Christian religion:

> The Savior said, "The commandments of the God of Heaven Shangdi are do not kill, do not practice licentiousness, do not steal the property of others, and do not bear false witness. You must also show filial respect to your father and mother and love your neighbor as yourself."[31]

Liang also explained in a later chapter that the great acts of evil included murder, stealing and swindling, fornication, sorcery, and disobedience to parents.[32] Liang's book thus communicated not only the basic Christian obligation to worship God and renounce all idols, but also the immoral nature of various other behaviors that were prohibited by the Decalogue. The overlap between those proscribed behaviors and Hong's examples of incorrectness suggests that *Good Words* was the primary source of his new Christian ethic before 1847.

Hong's two-month stay with Issachar Roberts in 1847 was a key moment in the development of the Taipings' ethical system. Hong read both the Old and New Testaments during his visit, and the content of his later writings shows that he was deeply inspired (via the instruction of Roberts or his own private reading of the scriptures) by the biblical record of the Ten Commandments. The last of Hong's early religious writings (the *Second Exhortation*), which was almost certainly edited in response to his studies under Roberts, reveals an increased awareness of the biblical narrative regarding the Decalogue.[33] Before offering a detailed explanation of the prohibition on idolatry, Hong discussed the giving of the Ten Heavenly Commandments (*shi kuan Tiantiao*) to Moses on Mount Sinai: "By referring to the Old Testament, we learn that in early ages the Great Shangdi descended on Mount Sinai and with his own hand wrote the Ten Heavenly Commandments on tablets of stone, which he gave to Moses."[34] Although Hong did not go on to list each of the Heavenly Commandments, this brief extract confirms that he was now aware of their biblical status as the expressed will of God.

Hong's *Second Exhortation* discussed the giving of the Ten Commandments to Moses, but it did not record the individual commandments (except for the second) and their ethical implications. The *Book of Heavenly Commandments*, which was published in 1852 but possibly written during the late 1840s, was the first publication to list the God-given laws that all people had to obey:

1. Honor and worship the Great Shangdi.
2. Do not worship false gods.
3. Do not take the name of the Great Shangdi in vain.
4. On the seventh day, the day of worship, praise the Great Shangdi for his grace and virtue.
5. Be filial and obedient to your father and mother [*xiaoshun fumu*].
6. Do not kill or injure.
7. Do not commit adultery or be licentious.
8. Do not steal or plunder.
9. Do not utter falsehoods.
10. Do not conceive a covetous desire.[35]

Although the Taipings used idiomatic language and offered their own unique commentaries, their list of the Ten Heavenly Commandments was a faithful summary of the Decalogue that Hong had encountered in the translated Christian scriptures.

The *Book of Heavenly Commandments* not only listed the Ten Commandments, but also explained that they were the core of the Taipings' new ethical system. In outlining the preconditions of individual salvation, the book declared that God would reward those who repented of their sins, rejected all false gods, and obeyed the Heavenly Commandments (*Tiantiao*) with the gift of eternal life in heaven.[36] A poem at the end of the same book reiterated that "those who obey the Heavenly Commandments and worship the true God will, when they part with the present, ascend to heaven with ease."[37] This redemptive formula (repentance, worship of God, obedience) can also be seen in other publications that stressed the relationship between obedience to the laws of God and the enjoyment of everlasting life in heaven. The *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle*, for example, emphasized that connection in its discussion of Jesus' earthly ministry: "At the age of thirty, Christ was spreading his teachings and converting followers. He exhorted people to repent of their sins before Shangdi, abandon all evil demons, and obey the Heavenly Commandments, so that they could ascend to heaven."[38] These extracts show that the Christian Decalogue was at the heart of the early religious message that Hong communicated to the people of Guangxi. Hong promised his followers that they would secure eternal life in heaven if they simply repented of their sins, worshipped the true God, and obeyed the Heavenly Commandments.

The idea that Jesus taught people to obey the Heavenly Commandments, which Hong articulated in the *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle*, was most

probably inspired by the Gospel of Matthew. In one particular passage (Matthew 5:17–19), Jesus declares that he has come to fulfill (not abolish) the law and explains that those who follow and teach the commandments "will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven [*Tianguo*]."[39] Hong, who believed that he was establishing the Kingdom of Heaven on earth (see Chapter 3), defended this view of Jesus' relation to the law in his annotations to the New Testament. Against Paul's claim that Jesus had "abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances" (Ephesians 2:15), Hong, quoting the text of Matthew 5:18, asserted that the Heavenly Elder Brother did not destroy the law of God or the Ten Commandments in particular.[40] This comment confirms not that the Taipings were ignorant of the New Testament's message, but that they followed a *non-Pauline* voice that emphasized the continuity between Old Testament law and the ministry of Jesus. For Hong and his followers (including Hong Rengan), the law and the gospel were complementary, rather than antithetical.[41]

The Taipings further emphasized the moral significance of the law by associating obedience to the Ten Commandments with the cultivation of uprightness (*zheng*). The *Three Character Classic*, one of the books that the Taipings used for the instruction of children, concluded its discourse on the Heavenly Commandments by urging its young readers to "rectify [*zheng*] their persons."[42] Focusing on this particular theme of moral rectification, the *Poems for the Young* suggested that obedience to the Ten Commandments was the means by which a self-cultivating individual worked toward uprightness. The text instructed such individuals to "diligently cultivate uprightness [*lian zheng*] and obey the Ten Heavenly Commandments."[43] This new idea of self-cultivation through obedience to divine law appears to have developed from the early religious message that Hong proclaimed to the people of Guangxi. Hong first associated the biblical commandments with the rectification of the heart in a poem (recorded in the *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle*) that he wrote in 1843: "When our transgressions inundate heaven, we may fortunately rely on the atonement of Christ. We must overcome evil demons and obey the Holy Commandments [*zun shengjie*]. Respectfully worshipping Shangdi, we rectify our hearts [*zheng xintian*]."[44] The Taipings' core moral message, as we can see from the above extracts, was that individuals who obeyed the Heavenly Commandments would realize the quality of uprightness within themselves and later achieve eternal life in heaven. The Christian Decalogue was, in short, the definitive moral code for all worshippers of Shangdi.

The reports of missionaries and other foreigners who visited Nanjing confirm that the Ten Commandments functioned as the basic rules of conduct for all soldiers and citizens of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. Describing his arrival at Nanjing in 1854, the American Presbyterian Michael Simpson Culbertson (1819–62) explained that many of the rebels were able to recite the commandments from memory:

> Large numbers of the insurgents soon crowded the decks of the steamers.... With many of them I was able to converse intelligibly, though with more or less difficulty. A considerable number were able to repeat the ten commandments, as given in their own books. Further than this, they seemed to have received but little instruction.[45]

The fact that many of Culbertson's interlocutors lacked any religious knowledge beyond the Heavenly Commandments indicates that even the most religiously uninformed or uncommitted followers of Hong would have been aware of the Decalogue. This inference is further supported by one of Thomas Taylor Meadows' reports, which was published in 1853 following the first British expedition to Nanjing. As Meadows explained in his report, "Their moral code, the Insurgents call the 'Heavenly Rules', which on examination proved to be the Ten Commandments. The observance of these is strictly enforced by the leaders of the movement, chiefly Kwang-tung [Guangdong] and Kwang-se [Guangxi] men."[46] Augustus Lindley also confirmed that the Taipings recited the Ten Commandments (together with their unique commentaries) as part of their religious services.[47] The great emphasis on the Decalogue in Taiping publications thus reflected a religious world in which all members of society were expected to know and obey the will of God as expressed in the Ten Commandments.

According to Hong, other Taiping writers, and the many people who embraced their religious message, the basis of a morally good life lay in worshipping God and obeying his Heavenly Commandments. While these religious commitments suggest that the Taipings simply absorbed a biblical (Old Testament) ethic, the analysis has shown that they actually repackaged the Ten Commandments as the moral instruments through which individuals cultivated uprightness and rectified their hearts. The Taipings, in other words, promoted a new Christian means of attaining the classical goal of moral rectification. Confucius and Mencius had previously taught that the example of an upright ruler could inspire the people to rectify themselves, but Hong now declared that obeying the universal laws of God was the only sure way to make one's heart upright.[48]

The Chief Transgressions: Licentiousness and Opium Smoking

The Taipings, in their ethical discourses, identified licentiousness and opium smoking as two of the primary violations of the Heavenly Commandments. Focusing on those particular transgressions, this section will reveal that Hong used the moral laws of Christianity to tackle the most visible social problems of his local world. The analysis will also suggest that Hong enforced those moral laws to maintain discipline within the Taiping army and prove that he was bringing the Kingdom of Heaven to earth. His focused attack on licentiousness and opium smoking served, in other words, pragmatic and ideological purposes.

Hong's *Ode on the Origin of the Way* described licentiousness as "the first and chief kind of incorrectness" and explained that sexual indulgence caused Heaven to be "most enraged."[49] This early denunciation of lustful behavior was repeated and developed by the Taipings in later publications. The *Book of Heavenly Commandments*, for example, condemned licentious relations in its commentary on the seventh commandment ("Do not commit adultery or be licentious"):

> For the sons and daughters of heaven, the men have men's quarters and the women have women's quarters. They are not allowed to mix. Men and women who are licentious are considered monsters. This is the greatest violation of the Heavenly Commandments.[50]

The Taipings, as this extract shows, saw licentiousness as the greatest transgression against divine law and the justification for the formal separation of the sexes within their communities. That separation, which was established by decree in January 1851, was strictly enforced by the Taipings.[51] The *Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature* explained that men, when visiting their families, could only speak to their wives and children at the door.[52] Hong's proclamation of February 1852 confirmed, furthermore, that anyone who broke the seventh commandment (that is, entered the forbidden quarters and/or engaged in sexual activities) would be punished by death: "If there are offenders against the seventh Heavenly Commandment, as soon as they are discovered, they shall be immediately apprehended, beheaded, and displayed to the public. There shall assuredly be no pardons."[53] If the formal separation of the sexes was not enough, the threat of execution and the display of decapitated heads would have helped to convince the most libidinous individuals to abstain from sexual activities.

Hong communicated his loathing of sexual indulgence not only in the religious texts that he wrote, but also in his amendments to the translated Bible. When Hong reprinted the book of Genesis from the Gützlaff Bible in 1853, he deleted the final eight verses of chapter 19. The original text (Genesis 19:31–38) records how the two daughters of Lot intoxicated their father, slept with him, and later gave birth to two sons (Moab and Benammi). Although their intention was to provide their aging father with offspring (which could have been interpreted as a selfless act of filial piety), Hong believed that in a morally corrupt world the narrative would act as a justification for licentiousness. The Taipings' Old Testament thus concluded Genesis 19 with the following passage: "Now Lot went up out of Zoar and settled in the hills with his two daughters, for he was afraid to stay in Zoar; so he lived in a cave with his two daughters."[54] Thanks to this revised ending to Genesis 19, readers of the Taiping Bible would never have known that one of God's servants had impregnated his own daughters. Hong's willingness to delete such stories from the biblical text shows the strength of his commitment to the seventh commandment and his desire to eradicate *all* sources of encouragement for licentious behavior in the world.

Besides attacking licentiousness, the Taipings' religious books strongly condemned alcohol drinking and opium smoking. Hong warned against the consumption of alcohol and "foreign smoke" (*yangyan*), a synonym for opium, in his early religious writings. His *Ode on the Origin of the Way*, for example, declared,

> There are others who drive on until they fall into a snare. Cooking and smoking opium, they become mad. In the present day so many brave men have injured themselves with the smoking gun. As for the love of alcohol, this is also incorrect. After starting a family, one should guard against the family-destroying brew.[55]

Hong continued his assault on alcohol and opium in the *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle*. According to Hong's account of his ascension, the Heavenly Father—observing people drinking, smoking, and acting licentiously—angrily complained to him that the people of the world had become "monstrous" (*guai*).[56] The *Book of Heavenly Commandments* reinforced these moral judgments and even suggested that opium smoking and licentious behavior were interrelated crimes. At the end of its commentary on the seventh commandment, the book asserted that

"the casting of corrupt glances, the harboring of corrupt imaginings about others, the smoking of opium, and the singing of corrupt songs are all violations of the Heavenly Commandment."[57] Opium smoking and sexual indulgence were, in other words, interconnected crimes that were completely at odds with the social aspirations of a God-worshipping and law-revering world.

The reports of missionaries and other foreign visitors again provide information on the Taipings' attempts to enforce their moral laws. The American Presbyterian Andrew Happer (1818–94), following a conversation with a Taiping rebel in Guangzhou, offered an overview of the moral situation at Nanjing: "Men and women occupy separate barracks, and all communication between the sexes is forbidden. Stealing, opium-smoking, and sexual intercourse even between husband and wife, when detected, are punished with death."[58] The execution of opium smokers was also confirmed by some of the foreigners who visited Nanjing. The evangelical Edmund Gardiner Fishbourne (1811–87), who was the commander of the first British vessel (HMS *Hermes*) to reach Nanjing in 1853, reported that the Taipings "behead for smoking or selling opium, and bamboo for smoking tobacco."[59] The French Jesuit Stanislas Clavelin (1814–62), who visited Nanjing in late 1853, offered the most graphic account of the Taipings' practice of decapitating opium smokers:

> In fact, they showed me, at a certain place, several heads fairly recently cut off and which, according to a placard posted beside them, had belonged to opium smokers. The cangue was the punishment for those who were caught smoking ordinary tobacco.[60]

Other reports suggest that the Taipings failed to eradicate opium smoking within their communities, but those who continued to indulge in the drug were now, as Clavelin's account shows, gambling with their lives.[61]

One explanation for the Taipings' ascetic moral system is that Hong and the Taiping princes (for example, Yang Xiuqing) recognized the military advantages that prohibitions on sexual activities and opium smoking would bring. Besides keeping the minds of Taiping soldiers fixed on revolutionary matters, the prohibition on sexual relations ensured that valuable female workers (laborers, soldiers, officials) would not be incapacitated by pregnancy and the nurturing of young children.[62] Likewise, Hong and the Taiping princes most probably believed that the prohibition on opium smoking would foster a more disciplined and dedicated army.

During the 1830s, the Qing dynasty's effort to suppress the uprising of the Yao—a minority group that lived in the Nanling mountain range of Guangdong, Guangxi, and Hunan—was undermined by the Cantonese soldiers' addiction to opium. According to Zheng Yangwen's estimation, opium addiction rendered as many as seven thousand (out of a total of ten thousand) soldiers invalids.[63] Even if Hong was unaware of opium's impact on this particular campaign, the ordinary addicts of Guangdong would have offered daily displays of the drug's debilitating effects.

The Taipings may have realized the military benefits of an ascetic moral system, but Hong's earliest (pre-1847) religious writings show that he had developed his strong moral convictions prior to the mobilization of the God Worshippers as a revolutionary force.[64] This observation leads us to Liang's *Good Words* as the most likely source of inspiration for Hong's dual attack on licentiousness and opium smoking. Like Hong, Liang vehemently denounced licentious behavior as a grave offense against God. Besides classifying fornication as one of the great acts of evil, Liang explained that God had once destroyed the lustful inhabitants of two ancient cities (Sodom and Gomorrah).[65] His book also included the final chapter of Revelation, which contrasted "those who keep his commandments" and enter the Holy City by the gates with the "fornicators" (*suchangbei*) and other degenerates outside (Revelation 22:14–15).[66] Finally, Liang's chapter on the moral weaknesses of the rich criticized those who "in their words and deeds act as though opium [*yangyan*], money, and sex are paradise."[67] Such strong condemnations of transient worldly pleasures most probably triggered Hong's belief that licentiousness and opium smoking were primary violations of divine law. Even if Hong's loathing of sexual indulgence and drug abuse preceded his encounter with Christianity, Liang's *Good Words* told him that those moral crimes were also hated by God.

The social realities of mid-nineteenth-century Guangdong explain why Liang's moral denunciations were accepted and amplified by Hong in his religious writings. At the start of the nineteenth century, Guangzhou not only had the "largest army" of opium smokers in China, but also had a well-established leisure boat industry that offered opium and sexual recreation to pleasure-seeking men.[68] The men of Guangdong could also enjoy opium and the company of prostitutes at brothels, which used the drug as a bait to lure addicted males through their doors.[69] This vibrant opium-sex industry, which was firmly established in Guangdong before the arrival of British gunboats in 1839, helps us to understand why Hong grouped licentiousness and opium smoking as interrelated crimes. His

strong condemnation and prohibition of those behaviors confirms, furthermore, that he was using the moral message of Liang's *Good Words* to tackle the most visible social problems (opium addiction and prostitution) of his local world.[70]

It is almost certain that Hong saw this localized moral crusade as confirmation that he was bringing the Kingdom of Heaven to earth, since the absence of fornicators was a sign of the Holy City as described in the Book of Revelation. Hong first encountered that biblical description of the Holy City in Liang's *Good Words*, which incorporated the final chapter of Revelation from the Morrison-Milne Bible. Hong, as we saw in Chapter 3, later declared in his annotations to Revelation that this Holy City—the New Jerusalem—was the Heavenly Capital at Nanjing.[71] This desire to prove that he was creating a biblical utopia on earth, together with the more pragmatic demand for military discipline, explains why Hong enforced the separation of the sexes and the prohibition on opium smoking so strictly. The Taipings ended the separation of the sexes (allowing married couples to resume their relationships) in 1855, but they would never have abandoned their general enmity for the fornicating and opium-smoking "degenerates" who belonged outside the Heavenly Kingdom.[72]

A Christianized Doctrine of Filial Reverence and Loyalty

Filial reverence and loyalty were two of the most frequently discussed virtues in the religious publications of the Taipings. The emphasis that Hong and other Taiping writers placed on those virtues shows once again that they expressed their new Christian values within a Confucian ethical framework. The Taipings' discourses on filial reverence do not, however, confirm that they upheld the moral orthodoxy of Confucianism alongside their new Christian principles. The Taipings not only believed that the duty of filial piety (*xiao*) was derived from the Christian scriptures, but also Christianized the content of the classical doctrine by claiming that the Heavenly Father was the principal object of filial reverence.

According to the classical texts of Confucianism, the veneration of parents (in particular, one's father) was the foundational duty of human life. As the *Classic of Filial Piety* (*Xiao jing*) explained, "Of all the actions of people, there is none greater than filial piety. In filial piety there is nothing greater than the reverential awe of one's father."[73] Children, as the same

book explained, were supposed to demonstrate this reverential awe in their behavior as sons and daughters. A "filial son" (*xiaozi*), for example, would express reverence in his general conduct toward his parents, happiness in nourishing them, anxiety in seeing them ill, grief in mourning for them, and solemnity in sacrificing to them.[74] A filial son, in other words, would constantly revere his parents, care for them during their elderly years, and sacrifice to them (and, by extension, his ancestors) after they had died.[75] To underline the importance of these filial duties among the other ethical obligations of humankind, the *Classic of Filial Piety* declared that unfilial conduct was the greatest of the three thousand offenses.[76]

Confucian ethics not only dictated that sons should be respectful to their fathers, but also taught that filial children would naturally evolve into loyal and obedient subjects. As the *Classic of Filial Piety* put it, "Filial piety commences with the service of parents. It proceeds to the service of the ruler and is completed by the establishment of the character."[77] The book repeated this idea that filial obedience prepared an individual for political loyalty in its discussion of inferior officers: "As they serve their fathers, so they serve their mothers, and they love them equally. As they serve their fathers, so they serve their rulers, and they revere them equally."[78] The Chinese family, according to this logic, was a microcosm of the state, since political loyalty and obedience to the ruler were outcomes of a filial attitude at home. Due to this classical assumption, filial piety was traditionally viewed not only as the root of domestic virtue, but also as the foundation of social and political order.

Following the Confucian model, the Taipings declared that the veneration of parents was one of the basic duties of human life. The *Three Character Classic*—one of the Taipings' main instructional books for children—emphasized this foundational obligation: "Obey your parents of the flesh, and you will enjoy longevity. Those who repay their source will certainly obtain blessings."[79] The *Poems for the Young* offered a similar statement on the veneration of parents and suggested that the duty was derived from the fifth commandment: "Be filial to your parents and produce filial sons [*xiaozi*], the repayment is truly wonderful.... Obey the fifth Heavenly Commandment, and honor and emolument will descend from heaven."[80] Hong first discussed the biblical roots of filial duty in his *Ode on the Origin of the Way*, which equated obedience to parents with obedience to the will of God:

> The *Classic of Filial Piety* one should understand. The second kind of incorrectness is disobedience to parents. It is a great violation of the Heavenly

> Commandments, so urgently reform yourselves.... To be filial to one's parents is to be filial to the God of Heaven [Tiandi].... To be disobedient to one's parents is to be disobedient to the God of Heaven.[81]

The Taipings, as the above extracts illustrate, departed from the classical texts of Confucianism in claiming that filial piety was the will of God. Hong acknowledged that the duty was accurately discussed in the *Classic of Filial Piety*, but he believed that its origin and moral authority lay in biblical law.[82]

The Taipings' belief in the spiritual fatherhood of God encouraged them to view Shangdi—and not only physical parents—as a rightful recipient of the world's filial reverence. The *Essay on the Awakening of the Age* explicitly stated that God, as the creator of humankind, was an object of filial piety: "We are all sons and daughters of the Father. Let all be supremely loyal and filial in repaying the Father."[83] The same book explained that individuals could repay God's fatherly blessings by recognizing him as their Holy Father, worshipping him with reverence, and cultivating uprightness within themselves.[84] The *Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature* also explained that individuals could display their loyalty and filial piety to God by exterminating the demons that had wrongfully taken the credit for his gracious activities in the world:

> We are all sons and daughters of Shangdi. For sons and daughters to do the Father's work is by duty and by principle a matter of course. Exerting oneself to exterminate demons [*zhumie yaomo*] for the Heavenly Father, so as to pay back our irreconcilable enemy and prevent the demons from assuming responsibility for the great works of the Heavenly Father, is the way to display utter loyalty and filial piety. What could possibly be greater than this?[85]

This passage shows that the Taipings fully absorbed the Heavenly Father into the classical discourse of filial piety. Whereas the traditional Confucian doctrine focused solely on the individual's obligations to their parents and ruler, Hong and other Taiping leaders (in particular, Yang Xiuqing) instructed their followers to display filial loyalty to a universal God.

The Taipings not only introduced a new spiritual object into the discourse of filial piety, but also affirmed that the veneration of God took precedence over any moral obligation to parents. The *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle* emphasized that moral priority in its description of Hong's post-ascension encounter with his father: "His father, elder brothers, and others were all unaware of the reason for this [divine mission], and con-

sidered him mad. Moreover, the royal father scolded him. The Lord said, 'I am not your son. Can you scold me?'"[86] This anecdotal suggestion that obedience to the will of God was more important than the veneration of physical parents was later expressed in more explicit form by Yang Xiuqing:

> Before people are born, their souls exist in heaven. When desirous of birth, they descend into the world.... For daily food and clothing, we truly depend on Heaven.... We depend on parents for birth, and depend on Heaven for nourishment.... *The grace of parents is not small, but the grace of Heaven is boundless.* To repay grace we must be filial to parents, to offer thanks we must revere Heaven. If people know how to be filial to parents, still more should they know how to revere Heaven. If we can know that *the veneration of Heaven is superior to filial piety*, then we should piously revere Heaven and not regard the veneration of parents as unique [emphases added].[87]

According to Yang's analysis, the primary relationship was that of the individual to God. Parents gave the individual their physical form, but God created the soul that existed before and after the life of the body.[88] Parents fed and clothed the individual as a child, but God provided the food and the raw materials through which clothes were made. Yang thus regarded the veneration of God, whose grace was more profound than that of parents, as morally superior to domestic filial piety. Hong Rengan later reiterated this idea in claiming that the grace of the Heavenly Father, as the creator and nourisher of humankind, was greater than that of corporeal parents.[89]

Just as the Taipings' discourse of spiritual decline resembled the earlier version of Yang Tingyun (see Chapter **3**), so too their theocentric doctrine of filial reverence contained ethical ideas that had previously been articulated by the Christian scholar. Like the later Taipings, Yang believed that the grace of God was greater than that of earthly parents. Yang stressed that while parents were the source of an individual's body, Heaven nourished and preserved it through the provision of food and clothing. He also emphasized that Heaven, in addition to completing the generative work of parents, conferred a spiritual nature on each person.[90] Yang thus concluded that the duty of loving and revering the Lord of Heaven, who was the Great Father-Mother (Dafumu) and the Great Ruler (Dajun) of humankind, was more important than domestic filial piety or loyalty to the sovereign.[91] Such moral claims confirm that the Taipings were not the first Chinese Christians to explain the veneration of God within the Confucian discourse of filial piety. By absorbing God into that traditional discourse,

Yang and the Taipings could effectively communicate, in a locally meaningful manner, the primacy of veneration for God among the other (widely acknowledged) moral obligations of humankind.

The Heavenly Father, according to the Taipings' religious writings, expected the people not only to revere him and their physical parents, but also to display absolute loyalty to their earthly sovereign. This idea—implicit in Hong's claim that God had personally chosen him to rule as the Heavenly King—was discussed by Yang Xiuqing in the books that he wrote or commissioned. In the *Taiping Songs on World Salvation*, for example, Yang instructed his readers as follows: "Be filial to the utmost in serving your parents, be loyal to the utmost in repaying the Lord. *In this way you may comply with the will of Heaven* and enjoy Heaven's blessings [emphasis added]."[92] Yang, in the same book, also declared that the duty of loyalty was more important than filial piety:

> People depend on parents for their birth, and depend on rulers for their perfection. The grace of the ruler is the greater, with which nothing can compare. When people are absolute in their loyalty [*zhong*], they do not consider their parents. They only know their Lord, and do not know their own persons.[93]

Yang reiterated these ideas in poems that were attached to the *Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature*, telling his readers to "forget their families" and "disregard their own persons" for the sake of the kingdom.[94] Yang's moral discourses thus affirmed that loyalty to the Sovereign, like the veneration of God, preceded obedience to parents in the hierarchy of duties. The logic behind this claim lay in the Taipings' peculiar religio-political worldview: God had directly appointed Hong as the Heavenly King, and so loyalty to the Sovereign was an act of obedience to the most recently revealed wishes of God.

The Taipings' doctrine of filial reverence and loyalty represents a clear example of localization in their ethical system. The strong emphasis that Hong and other Taiping writers placed on filial virtue (that is, the veneration of corporeal parents) shows that they used their new Christian books and values to reinforce one of the established principles of Confucian moral philosophy. However, the Taipings' specific discourses confirm that they did not simply replicate the classical doctrine of filial piety. The inclusion of a new spiritual being, the Heavenly Father Shangdi, was the greatest change that the Taipings made to the traditional doctrine. God, as the creator of the soul and the bestower of "boundless" (*wubian*) grace, was the primary object of filial reverence for the Taipings. They also justified

the lesser duties of domestic filial piety and political loyalty as virtues that complied with the "will of Heaven" (*Tianxin*). Children, as ordered by God in the fifth commandment, were obliged to respect and obey their physical parents. The Sovereign, having been directly appointed by God as the Heavenly King, deserved the unconditional loyalty of the people. This tripartite hierarchy of obediences shows that the Taipings created a Christianized, or theocentric, doctrine of filial reverence and loyalty. God was not only the principal recipient of filial reverence, but also the source of the people's other moral obligations toward their parents and ruler.

A Confucianized Christian Ethic or a Hybrid Moral System?

The analysis of this chapter has shown that Confucian assumptions and discourses pervaded the Taipings' ethical system. Although the Taipings openly condemned Confucius and his teachings in the *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle*, their other religious books show that they articulated their new Christian ethic within a classical moral framework. Firstly, Hong adopted an optimistic anthropology that associated human nature with uprightness. He also asserted that individuals, because of the corrupting power of their environments, ought to practice self-cultivation (a classical ethical pursuit) in order to protect or restore the natural quality of uprightness within themselves. Obeying the Heavenly Commandments—the core obligation of the Taipings' ethical system—was the newfound means of attaining uprightness for all self-cultivating individuals. This idea that people needed to follow the commandments in order to realize (rather than overcome) an essential property of their natures shows that the Taipings absorbed their new moral obligations into a familiar, classically inspired ethical framework. The same conclusion can be drawn from the Taipings' discourses on filial piety. The Taipings repeatedly asserted that children were obliged to repay the grace of parents, thus confirming that their new Christian laws (in particular, the fifth commandment) were consistent with the basic duties of Confucian moral philosophy.

The above observations confirm that Hong and other Taiping writers were unable to eradicate the Confucian tradition that they had formally renounced in the *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle*. Even if Hong declared that Confucian books and teachings were erroneous, the points of emphasis in the Taipings' ethical system reveal that his intellectual perspective—or the lens through which he viewed Christianity—was radically shaped by

the classical texts that he had studied since childhood. This observation suggests that localization is often the result of an individual's or group's alternative (and locally shaped) *way of seeing*, rather than a deliberate effort to maintain an indigenous cultural identity. This conclusion is further supported by the Taipings' localized doctrine of God (see Chapter 4). Although Hong violently opposed all expressions of popular religion, his description of the Heavenly Father's physical appearance and female consort shows that he recreated the Christian God through the symbolism and conventions of his local religious world. Such examples from the theology and ethics of the Taipings confirm that even an individual who has rejected their indigenous cultural world (whether due to the influence of missionaries or the desire for a new identity) will continue to view new religious texts, concepts, and symbols from a perspective that reflects their local life experiences and socio-cultural background.

Confucian assumptions and discourses influenced Hong's moral thought, but the substance of the Taipings' new ethical system was derived from the Chinese Christian literature. According to Hong and his followers, the basis of a morally good life lay in venerating the Heavenly Father and obeying his Heavenly Commandments. Although the Taipings adopted an optimistic anthropology and emphasized self-cultivation, their books repeatedly declared that obeying the Ten Commandments was the only way to achieve moral uprightness and secure eternal life in heaven. Similarly, the Taipings' religious books frequently discussed the virtue of filial piety, but their theocentric doctrine taught that God was the primary object of filial reverence and the source of the people's other moral duties toward their parents and ruler. These core beliefs confirm that the Taipings proclaimed a Christian ethic within a Confucian discursive framework, rather than a hybrid moral system. The Taipings' religious works did not exalt the ethical teachings of Confucianism (as we might expect of a Christian-Confucian hybrid), but simply drew on classical assumptions and discourses in articulating their God- and commandment-centered moral system.

CHAPTER 6

Sacrifice and Charisma in the Heavenly Kingdom

This chapter will shift the focus from the beliefs and values of the Taipings to their ritual practices. The analysis will show that the Taipings' ritual practices, like their theological beliefs and ethical principles, represent key examples of localized Christianity. The first section will examine some of the Taipings' earliest rituals, such as prayers and sacrificial offerings. Those practices, which first emerged among the community of God Worshippers at Guangxi, confirm that Hong and his followers created a simple form of worship that drew heavily on local religious symbols and traditions. The following three sections will discuss the association of Yang Xiuqing with the Holy Spirit and the charismatic rituals that he performed at Guangxi and later Nanjing. Yang's role as communicator for God and supernatural healer reveals not only that the Taipings adopted a set of Pentecostal-type practices, but also that they communicated the power of their newfound God through the ritual forms of their local religious world. The final part of this chapter will discuss how Yang, during the five-year period of 1851–56, used his status as the mouthpiece of God to criticize Taiping officials (including the Heavenly King) and limit the power of Hong. The analysis will suggest that those charismatic communications (as interpreted by Hong) helped to bring about the internal conflict and fratricidal chaos of the mid-1850s, which was one of the main events behind the disintegration and ultimate failure of the Taiping Rebellion.

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Taiping Sacrifices: Animals, Delicacies, Rice, and Tea

The *Book of Heavenly Commandments* records some of the earliest and most remarkable rituals of the Taipings. Although the book was published after the start of the rebellion, the prayers and rituals that it discusses were almost certainly used by the God Worshippers before 1851.[1] The book allows us, therefore, to see the ritual life of Hong and his followers at its earliest stage of development. Significantly, the description of that ritual life shows that Hong and other leading God Worshippers constructed a localized system of worship that expressed their new Christian beliefs and values in a familiar religious guise.

One of the first things we learn from the *Book of Heavenly Commandments* is that Hong and his associates baptized their new recruits.[2] The book provides a detailed description of the baptismal ceremony that the God Worshippers used:

> Let the supplicant kneel down in the sight of Heaven and pray to the Great Shangdi for forgiveness of sins. They may use a written form of prayer, and when the prayer is over, they may take a basin of water and wash their whole body clean, or they may immerse themselves in a river, which is even more wonderful.[3]

This extract shows that the Taipings' baptismal ceremony was relatively simple: the candidate prayed for forgiveness of sins and then washed themselves clean at a basin or in a river. The *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle* reveals that Hong Xiuquan, Hong Rengan, and Feng Yunshan originally baptized themselves in a local lake named Shijiaotan, which may explain why the *Book of Heavenly Commandments* described immersion as the "more wonderful" form of baptism.[4] Taking all new converts to a lake or river was not, however, particularly convenient for a rapidly expanding religious (and later revolutionary) movement. The Taipings thus practiced sprinkling and washing of the head and chest more often than immersion.[5]

The Taipings, as the reports of missionaries confirm, did not celebrate the Eucharist in their religious services.[6] They did, however, use articles of food and drink in worshipping the Heavenly Father Shangdi. The *Book of Heavenly Commandments* reveals that Hong and his followers regularly offered animals, delicacies, rice, and tea as sacrifices to God. Such offerings, as the book explained, were required on most of life's joyous occasions:

> When there is a birthday, a celebration for a month-old child, or a marriage—when there is any such happy occasion—all should use animals, delicacies, tea, and rice [*sheng zhuan cha fan*] in sacrificing to the Great Shangdi.[7]

The Taipings believed that sacrifices of this kind could be used not only to offer thanks to God, but also to request particular blessings from the Heavenly Father Shangdi. Whenever a member of the community died, for example, family and friends could use the sacrifices to request their speedy ascension to heaven. The supplicant would offer the sacrifices with the following prayer:

> Now I reverently prepare animals, delicacies, tea, and rice, respectfully offering them to the Heavenly Father Shangdi. I implore the Heavenly Father Shangdi to display grace and allow the soul of his unworthy servant to ascend to heaven and enjoy the great blessings of the Heavenly Father Shangdi.[8]

Such requests for divine grace would have appealed to filial children who were grieving the loss of a parent. The prayer suggested that God might listen to the pleas of worshippers who offered sacrifices, and that the sacrifices—if offered in faith—could help to secure eternal blessings for the deceased in the afterlife.

Other official publications confirm that the sacrifices were central to the Taipings' worship of God. Changes that Hong made to Medhurst's *Important Discourses on Heavenly Principles* show that he consciously rejected the belief of the Protestant missionaries that God did not respond to physical sacrifices. The original text had declared that worshippers who sought the protection and blessings of God were not required to offer money or gifts. The worshipper, Medhurst explained, simply needed to honor and praise God.[9] Hong, in his edited version of the text, added a more detailed description of the objects that could not be used as sacrifices to God. He also explained that rice, animals, and delicacies were appropriate offerings for Shangdi:

> They may seek his protection and hope for his blessings, and there is no need for incense, candles, money, valuables, or anything of the kind. It is merely necessary to prepare with reverence the five grains, animals, and delicacies that Shangdi has made for the nourishment of people, and then, with a mind filled with veneration, let the mouth pour forth its praises.[10]

The *Imperially Composed Thousand Word Edict* provides further information on the animal sacrifices that Hong and his followers offered to

the Heavenly Father. That book explained that at the forbidden palace in Nanjing "the towers reached up to the sky" and "on altars sacrificial animals were burned."[11] The Taipings' sacrificial animals, in other words, were not merely slaughtered at an altar, but were actually burned or roasted so that God could partake of their spiritual essence.

A number of missionaries who visited Taiping territories commented on their peculiar practice of preparing food and drink as sacrifices to God. Charles Taylor (1819–97), following a trip to Zhenjiang in mid-1853, discussed the use of the four sacrificial objects among the Taipings:

> In the middle of the room in which we ate was a table, on which were placed twelve bowls—three each of rice, of meat, of vegetables, and of tea. On inquiring the meaning of this, I was told it was designed as an offering to the Supreme Ruler—one of each kind respectively for the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.[12]

The American Presbyterian Andrew Happer, drawing on information from a Taiping rebel in Guangzhou, confirmed that in each house the daily and Sabbath sacrifices consisted of "three bowls of rice, three dishes of greens, three plates with roast pork, and three cups of tea, all of which are offered to Shang-ti."[13] A later report by the American Baptist J. L. Holmes reveals that animal sacrifices were also offered at the Heavenly King's palace in Nanjing. Holmes reported that he, while attending a Taiping ceremony, saw a roast pig, the body of a goat, and other sacrificial objects on tables in the outer court.[14] These accounts show that the offerings described in the *Book of Heavenly Commandments* were a permanent feature of the Taipings' worship. The sacrifices, which first emerged among the God Worshippers at Guangxi, were performed by Taiping officials and ordinary worshippers throughout the occupation of Nanjing (1853–64).[15]

The Taipings' sacrificial rituals—like the physical appearance of the Heavenly Father—offer evidence of Christianity's localization through the popular religious culture of China. The sacrificial rituals and their symbols (animals, delicacies, rice, and tea) were taken from popular religious ceremonies for the worship of gods and ancestors. A typical ancestral sacrifice in Qing China consisted of a drink offering (such as wine or tea) and several dishes of rice, meat, vegetables, and fruit.[16] In mid-nineteenth-century Guangdong, people regularly offered such articles of food and drink to their ancestors and deities.[17] Those sacrificial rituals were so central to the community's way of life that early Cantonese immigrants to

Canada (late nineteenth century) continued to make the traditional offerings in their new cultural environment. Every year during the Qingming Festival, the Chinese community in Canada would visit the cemetery and pay their respects to deceased clan members by lighting joss sticks and offering fruit, wine, roast pigs, steamed chickens, and other sacrificial objects.[18] This example from the Cantonese diaspora confirms that Hong and his followers used a familiar and highly localized ritual form to worship the Heavenly Father Shangdi. The Taipings no longer used incense and paper money, but their offerings of animals, delicacies, rice, and tea communicated the majesty of their God to an audience that associated such symbols with the veneration of dignified spirits.

Exposure to the translated biblical text may explain why Hong and other leading God Worshippers chose to worship their newfound God through sacrificial rituals. The Old Testament books that the Taipings printed in 1853 were full of references to, and regulations on, sacrificial offerings. Genesis 4:3–5, for example, states that God preferred Abel's offering of the firstlings of his flock to Cain's offering of fruit. The same book (Genesis 8:20) also explains that Noah, after the Great Flood, offered sacrifices of every clean animal and bird to God.[19] Exodus 29:38–41 even provided the God Worshippers with an ancient sacrificial model to follow. That passage explains that two year-old lambs, together with a grain offering of flour and beaten oil and a drink offering of wine, should be offered to God each day.[20] Numbers 15:1–10 provides a similar description of the meat (lambs, rams, and bulls), grain, and drink offerings that every Israelite was expected to present to God.[21] Hong, as these various Old Testament passages demonstrate, could easily (and legitimately) have inferred from the biblical text that sacrifice was the original and proper way to worship God. The Taipings used alternative ritual symbols (roast pork, rice, and tea), but their sacrifices still conformed to the basic Old Testament pattern of honoring God through offerings of meat, grain, and drink.[22]

If Hong required a further justification for his adoption of sacrificial rituals, he could have found one in the classical texts that he had studied since childhood. The Confucian classics contained numerous references to ancient Chinese sacrifices, many of which were explicitly offered to Shangdi (or Di, which Hong read as a synonym for Shangdi). The *Book of Rites*, for example, discussed the sacrifices that the Son of Heaven (Tianzi) offered to Shangdi and, in one passage, outlined the ritual examinations that ensured all sacrificial animals were acceptable to God.[23] The same book also highlighted the supplicatory function of the offerings in

discussing a great summer sacrifice for rain that was offered specifically to God (Di).[24] Similarly, the *Book of Poetry* suggested that sacrifices had been used historically to secure particular blessings from God. One of its poems claimed that Shangdi had responded to the sacrifices of Jiang Yuan by providing her with a son (the legendary figure Houji), while another poem claimed that God (Di) and Houji had "sent down blessings" (*jiang fu*) in abundance following the sacrificial offerings of Duke Xi.[25] Finally, the *Mencius*—in a passage that the Taipings later cited as evidence of the ancient Chinese worship of God—suggested that a person who adjusted their thoughts, fasted, and bathed could sacrifice to Shangdi.[26] Unlike the Old Testament passages and the publications of the Taipings, these classical texts (in particular, the *Book of Rites*) describe a variety of spirits and do not present Shangdi as an exclusive object of sacrifice.[27] Nonetheless, they identify an ancient Chinese tradition of sacrificing to Shangdi that may have reinforced Hong's belief—most probably derived from his reading of the Old Testament—that sacrifice was an appropriate form of worship for his new religious world.

The Taipings' prayers for the dead, as recorded in the *Book of Heavenly Commandments*, offer a second example of Christianity's localization through pre-existing ritual traditions. Nestorian and Catholic missionaries of the past, as we saw in Chapter 2, adapted to the cultural environment of China by allowing converts to express filial sentiments in rituals for the deceased. While Nestorians and Jesuits tolerated the established ancestral rituals, the Dominicans told converts that they could perform their filial duty by requesting (through offerings and prayers to God) their parents' release from purgatorial suffering. In a similar way, the Taipings created a new ritual practice that allowed filial children to communicate their concern for their parents' well-being in the afterlife. Although they abolished the conventional ancestral sacrifices and in some places openly defaced ancestral halls, the Taipings encouraged children (as well as other relatives and friends) to use prayer and sacrificial offerings to plead with God for their parents' ascension to heaven.[28] Many Protestant missionaries would have told Hong that an individual's faith in the work of Christ was enough to secure salvation, but the prayers and sacrifices that he created were for a non-Western audience that saw the welfare of deceased relatives as a responsibility of the living.

The Taipings' use of ritual symbols that were *previously* associated with ancestral sacrifice (namely, meat, rice, vegetables, and tea) reflected and reinforced their new ethical conviction that God was the primary object

of filial reverence (see Chapter 5). Hong confirmed this particular connection between belief and practice in his annotations to the New Testament. In response to the biblical claim that Jesus' sacrifice made sin offerings redundant (Hebrews 10:18), Hong asserted that Jesus did not abolish the sacrifices and that it was the duty of a "son" (*zi*) to repay grace by sacrificing to God the Father (Shenfu).[29] These notes show that Hong justified the sacrificial offerings as a means of repaying, or expressing gratitude for, the fatherly grace of God. The Taipings' sacrificial thank-offerings were, in other words, a ritualized expression of their theocentric doctrine of filial reverence. People could use the sacrifices not only to plead for their earthly parents' well-being in the afterlife, but also to communicate their gratitude for the more important or foundational grace of their spiritual father, God.

The Taipings' sacrificial rituals represent a localized form of worship and a ritualized expression of their Christian ethical convictions. Some readers may be tempted to view the sacrifices as signs of the Taipings' "unchristian" nature, but the Armenian Church offers a clear historical example against the idea (based on the dichotomization of Old and New Testaments, or law and gospel) that Christians cannot offer physical sacrifices to God. To this day, Armenian churches have a space reserved for the ritual killing of animals after worship.[30] This example highlights the need for us to move beyond essentialist views of "acceptable" Christian practice and see the Taipings' rituals as a locally meaningful form of worship. In mid-nineteenth-century China, their sacrifices of animals, delicacies, rice, and tea communicated the exalted status of God (as recipient) and the depth of the worshipper's reverence in a way that no other ritual symbol (for example, bread) could have done.[31]

Yang Xiuqing: The "Holy Spirit" and "Wind of the Holy God"

Until his death in 1856, Yang Xiuqing acted as charismatic communicator and supernatural healer within the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. These religious practices first emerged among the God Worshippers in 1848, when Feng Yunshan was in prison at Guiping and Hong had returned to Guangzhou to appeal to the governor-general of Guangdong and Guangxi on his behalf.[32] In the absence of those two leaders, a few charismatic God Worshippers—including Yang—stepped forward to take on spiritual responsibilities and direct the religious community at Guangxi.

Yang, a Hakka charcoal burner who later became the Eastern King of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, spoke for the Heavenly Father and performed healing rituals for people who were troubled by demon-inflicted illnesses. These spiritual powers, which Hong authenticated following his return to Guangxi in 1849, earned Yang the title Wind of the Holy God (Shengshenfeng) in 1853.[33] This section will discuss the exact meaning of that religious title, drawing on explanations that Hong left behind in his biblical annotations. Such close analysis will show that the title was not an affirmation of Yang's divine status, but an indicator of his charismatic role and its spiritual significance for the Taipings.

According to Protestant missionaries and other foreigners who visited Nanjing, the association of Yang with the Holy Spirit (their reading of the term Shengshenfeng) represented—like Hong's claim to be the second son of God—a blasphemous attempt to deify a human being. Elijah Bridgman, who encountered the Taipings at Nanjing in 1854, reported that Yang was "regarded as almost, if not altogether, divine" by the officers of the Taiping court.[34] Walter Henry Medhurst (1822–85; son of the missionary) and Lewin Bowring (1824–1910) also commented on Yang's "blasphemous" title following an official British expedition to Nanjing in 1854. As they explained,

> The assumption of Divinity by the Eastern King is so revolting and blasphemous as entirely to have shaken any belief we may have had as to the sincerity of the profession of Christianity made by the insurgents, nor can it be said that the title of the Holy Ghost taken by him was assumed in ignorance of its real meaning.[35]

Medhurst and Bowring thus believed that Yang was assuming divine status in identifying himself as the Holy Spirit. It was almost inevitable that Western observers who interpreted Yang's title in this way would question the sincerity of the Taipings' profession of Christianity. To those critical observers, titles such as son of God (Hong) and Holy Spirit (Yang) showed that the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom was led by two deluded individuals who sought not to bring the Chinese nation to Christ, but to convince its many people that they were fully divine members of the Godhead.

Hong's annotations to the New Testament offer a completely different perspective on the identity of Yang Xiuqing. Firstly, Hong's annotations show that the Taipings saw the title Shengshen (literally, "holy god/spirit")—the Chinese Bible's translation of Holy Spirit—as a synonym for

the Heavenly Father Shangdi. In his annotations to 1 Corinthians 2:10–16, Hong asserted that "the Holy God [Shengshen] is Shangdi" and rejected the idea that "the Holy God is himself the Holy God and Shangdi is himself Shangdi."[36] Hong also emphasized the interchangeability of the terms Shangdi and Shengshen in his notes on Matthew 4:1–22:

> Shangdi is the Holy God [Shengshen], and comes together with the Holy Spirit [Shengling]. Therefore, at the festival of Pentecost the Holy God descended and there appeared flames and wind. Flame and wind both come from Shangdi and are combined into one.[37]

This passage is critical for understanding Hong's ideas about the Holy Spirit and the identity of Yang Xiuqing. Although Hong clearly distinguished God (Shangdi, Shengshen) and the Holy Spirit (Shengling), he acknowledged a functional relationship between the two in claiming that Shangdi "comes together with the Holy Spirit." The discussion of fire and wind is particularly informative and suggests that Hong saw the Holy Spirit as an instrument or expression of Shangdi in the world.

The Chinese term for Holy Spirit (Shengling) that Hong used in the above passage was taken not from the Gützlaff Bible, but from the doxology that he had learned during his time with Issachar Roberts in 1847. Focusing on this particular term and the title Shengshenfeng, Hong carefully explained his pneumatological doctrine in his comments on 1 John 5:7:

> The Holy Spirit [Shengling] is the Eastern King. It is Shangdi's sacred will that his knowledge is boundless and that he should relieve the epidemic and restore people's souls.... The Holy God [Shengshen] is Shangdi. If there were a separate Holy God, then we would have another deity. Therefore, the Wind of the Holy God [Shengshenfeng] is the Holy God Shangdi's Wind. It is not that the Wind is the Holy God. The Wind is the Eastern King, the one in heaven who dispatches the winds.[38]

Hong suggested in these notes that the Holy Spirit or Wind, which he equated with Yang Xiuqing, was an instrument or expression of the Holy God Shangdi. Whereas the missionaries saw the terms Shengshenfeng and Shengshen as synonyms, Hong believed that the former (along with its synonym Shengling) pointed to a wind-like force that belonged to the Holy God (Shengshen). The Holy Spirit or Wind (Yang) was not a distinct member of the Godhead, but simply the *means* by which the Heavenly Father Shangdi made himself known in the world.

Hong further emphasized this Wind-as-expression doctrine in his other annotations to 1 John 5:7. Significantly, Hong's comments suggested that God had personally chosen Yang to communicate his presence and messages to the world:

> Shangdi has now descended into the world, sending down the Eastern King. The one who sends down and entrusts the Eastern King is the Holy God. The original capacity of the Eastern King is the Wind, the Comforter [Quanweishi]. The Father knew that the New Testament contained erroneous records. Therefore, he sent down the Eastern King to proclaim the proof that the Holy God is Shangdi and the Wind is the Eastern King. He also knew that the people of the world mistakenly recognized Christ as Shangdi. Therefore, Shangdi sent down the Eastern King in order to make it clear that God the Father exists.[39]

This explanation of Yang's identity and relation to the Heavenly Father helps us to understand how Hong and the Taipings conceptualized the Holy Spirit. According to Hong, the Holy Spirit (Shengshenfeng, Shengling) was simply the spiritual expression of the Heavenly Father Shangdi in the world. That spiritual expression of God, which was mediated by a particular human being (Yang), could comfort the faithful on earth and reveal divine truths that were absent from (or even erroneously explained in) the Bible. It could also, according to the *Book of Heavenly Commandments*, "transform the hearts" (*hua xin*) of newly converted individuals who were striving for righteousness.[40]

Hong's annotations confirm that the Taipings' pneumatological doctrine was a product of the different translations of Holy Spirit in the Chinese Christian literature. Liang's *Good Words*—the first Christian book that Hong read—followed the Morrison-Milne Bible in translating Holy Spirit as Shengshenfeng. This compound word emphasized the wind-like quality of the Holy Spirit, but the ambiguity of the middle character *shen* ("god" or "spirit") meant that it could be read as either Holy Spirit Wind (Morrison's intention) or Wind of the Holy God. Hong opted for the second interpretation, thus making the Holy Spirit a wind-like force that belonged to God the Father (as Hong explained in his annotations to 1 John 5:7). Roberts' doxology (quoted in the *Book of Heavenly Commandments*) had associated Shengshenfeng with the alternative translation Shengling, and so Hong used the two terms interchangeably. However, when he met a third translation of Holy Spirit (Shengshen) in the Gützlaff Bible, he—in

accordance with his interpretation of Liang's *Shengshen*feng—simply read it as Holy God, a synonym for the Heavenly Father Shangdi. A clear connection thus exists between the different translations of Holy Spirit (especially Shengshenfeng) and the Taipings' belief that it was an instrument or expression of the Heavenly Father in the world. That unique interpretation reveals, furthermore, why Hong believed that it was possible to grant Yang the titles Shengshenfeng and Shengling without making him a member of the Godhead. The titles, according to Hong, only suggested that Yang was God's Wind, mediating his presence and expressing his will to the people of the world.

Charismatic Communications: The Heavenly Father "Instructs the Multitude"

The Taipings' belief that Yang was the Wind of the Holy God, or an expression of the Heavenly Father Shangdi, was grounded in the charismatic rituals that he performed from 1848 until his death in 1856. Yang's main spiritual duty during that period was to communicate the will of the Heavenly Father to Hong and the God-worshipping masses. He was joined in that role by Xiao Chaogui, a Hakka peasant (and later the Western King) who presented himself as the mouthpiece of the Heavenly Elder Brother Jesus. Yang's other spiritual responsibility, which was intimately linked to his identity as communicator for God, was to heal the sicknesses of the faithful. These charismatic practices, like the Taipings' sacrificial offerings, confirm that Hong and his closest followers constructed a localized ritual system that was fundamentally shaped by the popular religious culture.

Theodore Hamberg, drawing on information that he had obtained from Hong Rengan, graphically described the emergence of charismatic practices among the God Worshippers in 1848. The behaviors that he described are remarkably similar to those of other Pentecostal movements from the history of Christianity:

> They [Hong Xiuquan and Feng Yunshan] now learned that, during their absence in Kwang-tung [Guangdong], some very remarkable occurrences had taken place in the congregation of the God-worshippers, which had brought disorder and dissension among the brethren. It sometimes happened that while they were kneeling down, engaged in prayer, one or other of those present was seized by a sudden fit, so that he fell down to the ground, and his whole body was covered with perspiration. In such a state

> of ecstasy, moved by the spirit, he uttered words of exhortation, reproof, prophecy, &c. Often the words were unintelligible, and they were generally delivered in rhythm.[41]

Hamberg also explained that Yang experienced these "fits of ecstasy" more frequently than any other God worshipper. Speaking in the name of God the Father, he "reproved others' sins" (exposing the evil deeds of particular individuals), "exhorted to virtue," and "foretold future events."[42] These comments suggest that Yang's early communications consisted of admonitions, moral exhortations, and prophetic messages. The purpose of his communications, in other words, was to provide moral and spiritual guidance to the God-worshipping community.

The *Book of Heavenly Decrees and Proclamations* records some of the most important messages that Yang and Xiao conveyed to the people on behalf of the Heavenly Father and Jesus. At the beginning of the book, Hong declared that the charismatic communications started in 1848 when the Heavenly Father (April 1848) and Jesus (October 1848) "descended into the world and displayed innumerable miracles and powers."[43] Following this introductory statement, the book discusses particular examples of the Heavenly Father and Jesus descending into the world to instruct and guide the God-worshipping community. The first example, from April 1849, is a short statement in which the Heavenly Father commands the people to obey his orders.[44] The other examples, which describe charismatic performances that occurred during the first two years of the Taiping Rebellion (1851–52), are more elaborate and reveal the political function of the communications within the context of revolution.

A communication from April 1851 shows that one of the original purposes of Yang's communications—in addition to the provision of moral and spiritual guidance—was to confirm the revelations of Hong and inspire the people to serve him with loyalty. After instructing his audience to recognize the Heavenly Father and the Heavenly Elder Brother, Yang declared that each person must obediently serve the Heavenly King:

> The Heavenly Father said, "I have sent your Lord down into the world to become the Heavenly King, and every word that he utters is a heavenly command. You must be obedient, and you must sincerely assist your Lord and have regard for your King. You must not dare to act without restraint, nor be disrespectful. If you do not have regard for your Lord and King, every one of you will be in difficulty."[45]

The Heavenly Father appeared again in August 1851, declaring that he had given life to Hong and encouraging the people to be "loyal" (*zhong*) to him.[46] The content of these communications helps us to understand Hong's original decision, following his return to Guangxi in 1849, to confirm Yang's identity as the mouthpiece of God. Hong could easily have questioned the authenticity of Yang's communications (as he did for other charismatic God Worshippers at Guangxi), but he most probably believed that the voice of the Heavenly Father could help to consolidate his own position and authority among the God Worshippers.[47]

Besides instructing the people to serve Hong with loyalty, Yang and Xiao used their charismatic communications to promote the public's acceptance of their new Christian ethic. In April 1851, Xiao, speaking on behalf of Jesus, emphasized the people's ethical obligation to obey the Ten Commandments. As the Heavenly Elder Brother declared,

> All of you, my younger brothers, must keep the Heavenly Commandments and obey orders. You must be harmonious with your brothers.... You must cultivate goodness and cultivate uprightness within yourselves. You must not go into the villages and search out other people's possessions. When going into battle, you must not flee on approaching the field.... Moreover, you must, with united hearts and united strength, together conquer the rivers and the mountains.[48]

This communication not only emphasized the ethical obligation to keep the Heavenly Commandments and "cultivate uprightness" (*lian zheng*), but also affirmed that it was the duty of every soldier to support the revolutionary mission with bravery and loyalty. The utterances of Jesus thus complemented those of the Heavenly Father in stressing the urgent need for all people to support the Heavenly King and his mission to save the world.

Those who dared to disobey the communications were, like all other "demons" that opposed God, exterminated by the Taipings. The *Book of Heavenly Decrees and Proclamations* provides an account of one particular execution at the hands of the Heavenly Father. In August 1851, Yang, as the conveyor of God's judgment, ordered the execution of an individual named Huang Yizhen for disobeying commands, deceiving Heaven, lacking faith and virtue, and causing others to retreat in battle. Using the death of Huang Yizhen as a lesson for others, Yang instructed the people to "obey the Heavenly Commandments" (*zun Tianjie*) and warned that "if you disobey like Yizhen, your crimes will be boundless."[49] The killing

of Huang Yizhen was not the last time that Yang used the voice of the Heavenly Father to order the execution of a disloyal follower. Drawing on a network of informers, Yang put many other "traitors" to the sword before his own demise in 1856.

The Healing Powers of the "Lord Redeemer of Sicknesses"

Besides communicating for the Heavenly Father, Yang demonstrated his charismatic power by healing the sick. This ability to cure the illnesses of the faithful earned Yang the title Lord Redeemer of Sicknesses (Shubingzhu).[50] More importantly, Yang's adoption of this spiritual role further confirms that the Taipings created a localized ritual system that was rooted in the practices of Chinese popular religion.

Theodore Hamberg, in his account of the God Worshippers' early religious practices at Guangxi, offered a detailed description of Yang's healing rituals. His description focused on Yang's method of curing individuals by absorbing their sicknesses into his own body:

> It appears, also, that many sick persons had been cured in a wonderful manner by prayer to God, and Yang was said to possess the gift of curing sicknesses by intercession for the sick. From the description, it would almost seem as if Yang had willingly submitted and prayed to have the sickness of the patient transferred to himself, and that he for a short while had borne his sufferings, whereby he redeemed the disease of the patient, and was afterwards himself released from the consequences of his own intercession.[51]

The prayers that Hamberg mentioned in the above extract were probably similar to the prayer for healing in the *Book of Heavenly Commandments*. According to that book, an individual suffering from sickness could pray to God in the following way:

> I implore the Heavenly Father Shangdi to show grace and pity in rescuing me, so that calamity and sickness are speedily removed, and my body restored to health. If some demon attempts to injure me, I implore the Heavenly Father Shangdi to display greatly the heavenly majesty and sternly exterminate the demon.[52]

This prayer suggests that the Taipings saw sicknesses as demon-inflicted phenomena that could be cured through spiritual means. Yang, as the

religious books of the Taipings explained, was the master of those spiritual methods. His God-given mission was to use his unique powers to "exterminate the demons" (*mie yao*) and "redeem the sicknesses" (*shu bing*) of the afflicted.[53]

Other Taiping publications confirm Hamberg's claim that Yang healed the faithful by transferring their sicknesses to his own body. The *Taiping Songs on World Salvation*, for example, declared that he "redeemed sicknesses *with his body* and saved the people" (emphasis added).[54] The *Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature* later explained the emotional and physical impact that this particular healing method had on Yang:

> When the Eastern King was redeeming sicknesses, he slept uneasily and enjoyed no flavors in his food. He did not dismiss hardship, but was prepared to taste all misery and bitterness, to the point that he was deaf and mute. With his own body he redeemed the sicknesses of the multitude.[55]

The same book also explained that in 1850 Yang suddenly lost his hearing and speech due to "the toil of redeeming sicknesses for the brothers and sisters."[56] These brief descriptions suggest that Yang's healing rituals caused him to feel emotionally drained and physically exhausted. The suffering that Yang seemed to endure (uneasiness when sleeping and loss of taste, hearing, and speech) told his audience that he had genuinely absorbed their illnesses into himself in order to achieve cures.

Yang's charismatic performances confirm that the God Worshippers of Guangxi adopted a set of highly localized rituals for their new religious world. Shamanism, despite being officially outlawed by the Qing dynasty, was extremely popular among the ordinary people of south China during the nineteenth century. Shamans in Guangdong, Guangxi, and other Chinese provinces claimed that they could communicate with the spirit world (usually following their possession by a spirit) and thereby find solutions for the spiritual problems of individuals.[57] In one recorded case from mid-nineteenth-century Guangdong, a female shaman made contact with the spirits on behalf of Lai Xinglian (1797–1877), a Hakka man who later became a Christian evangelist. The shaman told Lai that an uneasy "spirit" (*gui*) had brought death to his wives and children because of an ancestor's failure to repay a solemn debt. She then instructed Lai to repay the debt on his ancestor's behalf through sacrificial offerings (including tea, wine, bread, a pig's head, a cock, a fish, incense, gold paper, and candles) to the spirit.[58] Popular shamans of this kind not only communicated with

spirits, but also offered ritual healing for physical illnesses. As many illnesses were attributed to demonic possession, the shamans' healing rituals often involved driving out evil spirits from the bodies of the afflicted.[59] These popular shamanistic practices, which were particularly prevalent in the Xunzhou region of Guangxi, show that Yang expressed his and his newfound God's power through the ritual forms of his local religious world.[60] According to Robert Weller, such familiar demonstrations of spiritual power were what first attracted many people in Guangxi to the religion of the God Worshippers.[61]

Several books from the New Testament, which describe the spiritual gifts (or charismata) that God has previously bestowed on Christians, may have inspired the localized ritual practices of the God Worshippers at Guangxi. The Acts of the Apostles (2:1–13) describes how the twelve apostles, on the Jewish feast of Pentecost, were "filled with the Holy Spirit" and spoke about "God's deeds of power" in the various languages of their listeners.[62] Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians (chapters 12 and 14) discusses, furthermore, the various gifts of the Spirit (for example, speaking in tongues, prophecy, and miraculous healing) that are available to Christians.[63] Significantly, the first Christian book that Hong received (Liang's *Good Words*) emphasized these spiritual gifts in a chapter on Acts 19. The beginning of that chapter (Acts 19:6) explained that the Holy Spirit descended on Paul's disciples, causing them to speak in "tongues" (*yiyin*; literally, "unusual sounds") and prophesy.[64] The same chapter (Acts 19:11–12) also described how Paul miraculously cured the demon-inflicted illnesses of the sick: "God did extraordinary miracles through the hands of Paul, so that when the handkerchiefs and aprons on his body were placed on the sick, their illnesses left them, and the evil spirits came out of them."[65] Although Paul did not speak as the mouthpiece of God or heal by absorbing illnesses into his own body, the Acts of the Apostles suggests that he and the disciples uttered spiritual messages under the influence of the Holy Spirit and miraculously healed the sick. Liang's book and the biblical text that it cited thus told Hong, Yang, and other leading God Worshippers that charismatic communication and supernatural healing were standard Christian practices and authoritative expressions of God's power in the world.

Although the Taipings' religious publications do not mention the charismatic activities of Paul and the disciples, they do discuss the healing miracles of Jesus. The *Imperially Composed Thousand Word Edict*, in particular, outlined the various diseases and disabilities that Jesus cured during his time on earth:

> The Elder Brother Jesus was wise, farsighted, kind, and benevolent. So brilliant was his power, in helping the sick he was diligent and eager. The paralyzed rose and the weak stood straight. The mute spoke and the deaf heard. The dead were revived and the blind saw. Lepers were cleansed and the lame straightened.[66]

The canonical gospels were the most likely sources of information for this extract on the healing powers of Jesus. According to the Gospel of Matthew (one of Hong's most heavily annotated biblical books), Jesus cleansed lepers (8:1–4) and healed the paralyzed (9:2–8), the blind (9:27–30, 20:29–34), the mute (9:32–33), and the lame (15:30–31).[67] He also instructed his disciples to "cure the sick, cleanse the lepers, revive the dead, and cast out demons" (10:8).[68] It is entirely possible that these and other biblical references to Jesus' curing the sick—summarized by the author of the *Imperially Composed Thousand Word Edict*—first prompted Yang to assert and exercise his special healing powers from God. The text of Matthew 10:8 told a charismatically inclined individual like Yang that the ability to cure sicknesses was not restricted to Jesus, but a defining marker of his closest followers on earth.

Yang's charismatic rituals, as the analysis above suggests, may have originated in his recognizing the overlap between biblical and local forms of religious expression. Just as Chinese shamans communicated with spirits and cured demon-inflicted illnesses in Guangdong and Guangxi, so too biblical figures (such as Paul and the disciples) used their God-given powers to convey spiritual messages and heal the sick. Yang's response to this clear point of contact between the biblical text and his local religious world was not to declare that shamanistic practices were superstitious or heathen, but to announce that he—as the specially appointed agent of God—had the exclusive ability to communicate the will of the Heavenly Father and cure the sicknesses of his faithful followers on earth. Popular shamans were denounced by Hong as frauds, but their practices lived on through the Wind of the Holy God and the Lord Redeemer of Sicknesses.[69]

God Confronts His Son: The Politicization of Charismatic Authority

December 1851 was a key moment in the development of Yang's charismatic role within the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. Prior to that date, Yang had used his communications to encourage the people to serve Hong with loyalty and obey his "heavenly commands." Yang had also used the voice

of God to demand the execution of the "traitor" Huang Yizhen, but he had not yet made a direct attempt to criticize or challenge any of his colleagues within the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. The situation changed, however, in December 1851. At the trial of Zhou Xineng, Yang asserted his right to criticize and condemn those in positions of authority (albeit in lower positions than him) who were not fulfilling their duties. This development would culminate two years later in Yang's open criticism of Hong, the Heavenly King.

The trial and execution of Zhou Xineng is carefully described in the first *Book of Declarations Made during the Heavenly Father's Descent to Earth* (*Tianfu xiafan zhaoshu*; 1852 [hereafter *First Book of Declarations*]). The first thing we learn from the record of Zhou Xineng's trial is that Yang had a network of spies that supplied him with the information for his charismatic performances. In exposing Zhou's plot to enter the Taiping camp and secure supporters for an imminent attack by Qing forces, Yang pointed to the suspicious activities that the Heavenly Father (or his spies) had observed and reported to him:

> The Heavenly Father, again pointing at Zhou Xineng, said, "You say that this treacherous affair did not originate in your own mind. Why then, not one full day after your return to court, did you take people to spy at the Heavenly Court's walls and towers, and what was it you discussed there? … You say that you in truth did not of your own natural inclinations act treacherously. Why then, as soon as you returned to court, did you go to see your wife and secretly give her orders, and what did you say to her?"[70]

In response to these incriminating revelations, Zhou gave up his denial of guilt and confessed to conspiring against the Taiping court. The following day, Zhou, together with his wife, son, and two accomplices, was executed.[71]

A clear indication of Yang's growing confidence and power can be found in his criticism and punishment of Zhu Xikun and Huang Wen'an. Zhu, a Taiping corps supervisor (*jianjun*), was reproached by Yang for failing to report the conspiracy of Zhou Xineng to his King. The punishment for Zhu's incompetence was two hundred blows.[72] Yang also reprimanded Huang, a Taiping patrolman (*xuncha*), for failing to report Zhou's treacherous intentions. The *First Book of Declarations* records the punishment that Yang, acting as the Heavenly Father, imposed on the careless officer: "The Heavenly Father accused Huang Wen'an, saying, 'At present you hold the heavenly commission to act as patrolman. What position do you

think you hold? You must receive one hundred blows!'"[73] These punishments demonstrated Yang's willingness to use his charismatic communications not only to bring traitors to justice, but also to discipline those within the Taiping hierarchy who failed to act in an appropriate way. Hong, who observed the trial of Zhou Xineng from the side, later discovered that even he—the second son of God and divinely ordained Heavenly King—was not exempt from the judgment of God.

The second *Book of Declarations Made during the Heavenly Father's Descent to Earth* (*Tianfu xiafan zhaoshu*; 1853 [hereafter *Second Book of Declarations*]) describes an extraordinary incident that occurred in December 1853, two years after the execution of Zhou Xineng. Speaking on behalf of the Heavenly Father, Yang openly criticized the character and conduct of Hong. His main complaint, which he expressed before two senior female officials, was that the Heavenly King was too "severe" (*lie*).[74] When Hong later heard that God had descended into the world, he rushed over to the second gate of the court to welcome the Heavenly Father. The *Second Book of Declarations* offers a clear account of the dialog that followed:

> The Heavenly Father, angry with the Heavenly King, said, "Xiuquan, you are at fault. Are you aware of it?" The Heavenly King, kneeling down with the Northern King and all the court officials, replied, "I, this small one, know that I am at fault, and beg the Heavenly Father to display grace and forgive me." The Heavenly Father said in a loud voice, "Since you acknowledge your fault, you must be given forty blows!"[75]

The Northern King and other officials loyally requested to take the punishment in Hong's place, but Hong insisted that he, as the guilty party, should receive the blows. This act of submission to the judgment of God prompted Yang to withdraw the punishment of forty blows.[76] Hong, by passively accepting the punishment, had already given Yang the symbolic display of subordination (to the restraining voice of the Heavenly Father) that he desired.

After his last-minute display of mercy, Yang went over to Hong's palace and carefully explained the sacred edicts that the Heavenly Father had communicated to him. That discussion, as recorded in the *Second Book of Declarations*, shows that Yang was using the voice of God to criticize and control Hong's behavior in the palace. Firstly, Yang declared that it was Hong's duty to teach and guide his son (the Young Lord, Youzhu), and not

to indulge his every wish.[77] He then turned to Hong's treatment of subordinates, instructing him to be more forgiving when female officials committed minor faults.[78] Yang also asserted that Hong, in order to avoid making mistakes when putting lawbreaking officials to death, should hand all cases of capital punishment over to his "younger brothers" (*dideng*) for consideration.[79] They would then carefully review the case and determine whether or not the offense was pardonable.[80] Hong, according to the official account of his and Yang's discussion, gladly accepted this power-limiting proposal:

> Your elder brother's disposition is by nature severe. Without the memorial of my brother, it is to be feared that there would have been wrongful executions.... Henceforth, I, your elder brother, will in every case definitely consult with my brother, and only then act.[81]

Hong also agreed, at a later point in their discussion, to stop kicking and lashing his wives. Instead, he would patiently instruct and guide them whenever they made a mistake.[82] Hong's willingness to accept such proposals from a technically subordinate prince shows that a significant power shift had taken place at Nanjing. Yang—a military commander and charismatic communicator who was regarded as the Wind of the Holy God and the third son of the heavenly couple—was effectively leading the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom by the end of 1853.[83]

Although the *Second Book of Declarations* suggests that Hong had accepted the gradual expansion of Yang's authority, the events of September 1856 show that he was deeply suspicious of Yang and carefully considering ways to counter what he saw as a plot to usurp the throne. In August, Hong, fearing that Yang was about to make his move, ordered Qin Rigang (d. 1856), Wei Changhui, and Shi Dakai (1831–63) to return to Nanjing for a mission to preserve his rule. At the beginning of September (while Shi was still on his way back to Nanjing), Qin and Wei's troops stormed Yang's palace, killing him, his family members, and any other associates that they could find. Yang's six thousand loyal soldiers were also slaughtered by fratricidal pro-Hong troops.[84] Whether or not the execution of Yang and his followers was justified, the fratricidal bloodbath at Nanjing severely weakened the Taipings as a revolutionary movement. The events of 1856 did not signal the inevitable demise of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, but they certainly left little hope for the future.

Historians have generally concluded, in line with Hong's judgment, that Yang was a treacherous megalomaniac who saw his charismatic role as

a way to accumulate power and eventually seize the throne.[85] The problem with this interpretation is that it marginalizes Yang's *spiritual* function and completely ignores the possibility that he was using the voice of God to *limit* the power—rather than usurp the position—of a harsh and abusive leader. The *Poems of the Heavenly Father*, a collection of five hundred poems that were addressed to the women (wives, officials, and attendants) of Hong's palace, suggests that the Heavenly King was extremely severe in his treatment of female staff. Those poems not only outlined the various offenses that would warrant a beating (for example, looking up at Hong, speaking too loudly, and being cheerless in appearance), but also prescribed execution as the penalty for any woman found guilty of blasphemy, irreverence (that is, failing to kneel at the appropriate moment), boldness, deception, disobedience to edicts, or violation of the seventh Heavenly Commandment.[86] Such examples show that Hong used the threat of force, which included severe punishments for seemingly minor crimes (for example, a beating for cheerlessness and execution for a breach of court protocol), to standardize and control the behavior of his many wives and female attendants. From this perspective, we can see that Yang's communications of December 1853 (in particular, his call for greater leniency and his proposals regarding capital punishment) *may* have been genuine responses to Hong's harsh and abusive conduct at Nanjing.[87]

Yang's Charismata: A Model of Localized Christianity in China

The analysis of this chapter has shown that the Taipings localized Christianity not only in their theology and ethics, but also in their ritual practices. Significantly, the analysis suggests that those localized ritual practices may have emerged in response to perceived overlaps between the biblical text and the local religious world. The Taipings' sacrificial offerings reveal the first of such text-world overlaps that may have contributed to the development of their ritual system. The sacrifices of animals, rice, and tea not only incorporated familiar ritual symbols from Chinese popular religion, but also loosely conformed to the Old Testament pattern of worshipping God through offerings of meat, grain, and drink. Yang's charismatic religious practices offer a further example of how the biblical text connected with the popular religious world of south China in the Taipings' ritual system. The belief that Yang communicated for the Heavenly Father and cured illnesses in his name shows that the God Worshippers—possibly in

response to the discussion of spiritual gifts in New Testament literature—embraced a set of power-displaying rituals that were noticeably similar to those of China's popular shamans. Many of the Protestant missionaries in China may have chosen to leave behind sacrifices, charismatic communication, and faith healing in their versions of Christianity, but for the Taipings those biblical rituals offered familiar and symbolically comprehensible ways of communicating the dignity and power of their newfound God.

The Taipings were the first group in the era of Protestant missions to highlight the overlap between the biblical record of charismatic practices (speaking in tongues, miraculous healing) and the popular religious culture of China. The rituals of various Chinese Christian groups from the twentieth century show that they were certainly not the last. The True Jesus Church (Zhen Yesu jiaohui), which was formed by the Beijing cloth dealer Paul Wei (Wei Enbo, 1876–1919) in the late 1910s, proclaimed a charismatic faith that emphasized baptism of the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, prophecy, and healing. Another Pentecostal group, the Jesus Family (Yesu jiating), was created by Jing Dianying (1890–1957) in 1927. The Jesus Family stressed the importance of individuals being filled with the Holy Spirit and offering "witness" (*jianzheng*) before the community. The ritual of witness, which was similar to the charismatic communications of Yang, involved an individual ascending to heaven in a vision to receive a spiritual message from God. On returning to earth (or full consciousness), the individual explained the things that they had heard to their fellow worshippers.[88] These two examples from the early twentieth century suggest that Yang's charismatic religious practices (communication and healing) offered the first real indication of what a localized Christianity would look like in China.[89] Perhaps Yang, Paul Wei, and Jing Dianying realized that a lively religion offering divine communication and healing was bound to attract people who had been exposed to the popular religious world of China. Or perhaps they were just expressing their newfound faith in a way that seemed natural to them.

CHAPTER 7

Poetry and Patriarchy in the Heavenly Palace

Previous chapters have shown that the theology and ethics of the Taipings were shaped, to a significant degree, by concepts and values from the Chinese classics. Chapter 5, in particular, showed that the Taipings constructed a Confucianized Christian ethic that promoted biblical laws within a Confucian moral framework. Building on that analysis, this chapter will examine the behavioral rules that Hong laid down for the wives and female attendants who lived and worked in his palace at Nanjing. Hong recorded those rules in the *Poems of the Heavenly Father* (*Tianfu shi*; 1857), a book that was specifically written for the instruction of palace women. Looking at Hong's feminine ideal and the specific duties that he discussed in that book, the analysis of this chapter will confirm that he maintained the patriarchal—and specifically Confucian—values that prevailed in late imperial China. This observation not only highlights further evidence of Confucianization in the Taipings' religious world, but also challenges the popular conception of the Taipings as champions of gender equality. The Taipings recognized the brotherhood and spiritual unity of humankind, but Hong's patriarchal values show that he neither viewed nor treated men and women as equals.

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Poems of the Heavenly Father: Context of Production and Significance

In mid-1852, the Taipings marched out of Guangxi province and started to push northward. Moving through Hunan and Hubei, the Taiping army reached the old Ming capital of Nanjing in March 1853. By the end of the month, the Taipings had captured the historic city and renamed it as the Heavenly Capital (Tianjing). Hong, who would reside at Nanjing until the collapse of the rebellion in 1864, lived in a grand Heavenly Palace where he was served, day and night, by female attendants. As Hong refused to employ eunuchs in the palace, over a thousand women served there as officials, laborers, and maids to the Heavenly King. The palace also housed the many wives that Hong had taken since the establishment of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom in 1851.[1] The palace in which these women lived "covered an immense area, and was surrounded by a large yellow wall, crowned with tall and graceful minarets, and a mass of green, golden, and scarlet roofs."[2] Fortunately, one of the Taipings' official publications allows us to see how Hong perceived and (to a certain extent) treated the women who lived behind that large yellow wall.

The *Poems of the Heavenly Father* is a collection of five hundred poems that Hong wrote for the instruction of his palace women. Unique among the Taipings' official publications, this book was published only a year after the fratricidal bloodbath that shook the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom in 1856. That disastrous episode not only destabilized the Taipings politically, but also made Hong insecure in his position and less trusting of those around him (including the palace women) at Nanjing. Hong's desire to reassert his authority following Yang Xiuqing's "challenge" was, in fact, the most likely reason behind his decision to publish a book of palace regulations in 1857. Without the internal chaos of the previous year, Hong probably would never have considered codifying the rules of conduct that he had established for the palace women.

The significance of the *Poems of the Heavenly Father* lies not only in showing how Hong responded to the Nanjing episode, but also in revealing how he viewed and treated the women who lived in the Heavenly Palace. Although the *Poems of the Heavenly Father*—as a prescriptive document outlining an ideal pattern of conduct—cannot be taken as a direct reflection of life at Nanjing, it nonetheless highlights Hong's attitude toward women and the behavioral norms that he sought to impose on his wives and female attendants. Against the popular perception of

the Taipings as an egalitarian movement committed to gender equality, Hong's collection of poems suggests that he had no intention of liberating Chinese women from the constraints of domestic life. Rather, the content of the poems confirms that the Taipings maintained the hierarchical and patriarchal values that prevailed in late imperial China. Hong's feminine ideal and discourses on palace duties show that he was not using Christian beliefs to destroy Confucian values, but simply imposing on Taiping women a new Christianized form of subservience.

The Taipings as "Liberators" of Chinese Women

One of the most popular assumptions in the historiography of the Taipings is that they were the first "modern" liberators of Chinese women. The ideological basis for this claim lies in the Taipings' many pronouncements on the brotherhood of humankind. Developing their basic belief in the fatherhood of God, the Taipings declared in their publications that the people of the world—both men and women—were united as spiritual siblings. According to many previous interpreters, this particular belief confirms that the Taipings were social revolutionaries who sought to create an egalitarian world in which men and women would be treated as equals.

Many Chinese scholars, as we saw in Chapter 3, have viewed the Taipings as an egalitarian movement that pursued the elimination of feudalism and the establishment of human equality on earth. Those scholars trace the Taipings' egalitarian values not to their spiritual beliefs about the fatherhood of God, but to their class identity as Chinese peasants and victims of feudal oppression. According to Li Jinquan and others, the Taipings' social crusade (in particular, their advocacy of human equality) confirms that they were peasant rebels and revolutionary ancestors of the Chinese Communists.[3] This interpretation, which is also expressed in commemorative museums and on statues of Hong Xiuquan (see Figures 1.1–1.3 in Chapter 1), legitimizes the Communist government by suggesting that the establishment of a socialist republic was the *inevitable* outcome of China's modern revolutionary history. The Taiping Rebellion, as an early expression of revolutionary class consciousness, was one of the key historical events that pushed China toward the telos of socialism.

Another interpretation of the Taipings' belief in human brotherhood is that it signifies the assault of Western modernity (including the all-important notion of human equality) on Chinese tradition. Rejecting the socialist telos of the Chinese historiography, a number of Western interpreters have argued

that the Taipings' egalitarian values highlight their adoption of a "modern," Christian, and fundamentally "anti-Confucian" worldview. Joseph Levenson, for example, has suggested that the Taipings used their Christian-inspired belief in the brotherhood and equality of humankind (along with other "non-reformist" doctrines and policies) to launch an attack on the traditional, Confucian culture of China.[4] From this perspective, the Taiping Rebellion represents the "conflict" of Christianity and Confucianism and the start of traditional China's demise at the hands of Western modernity. The Taiping Rebellion, in other words, was not a prototypical peasant uprising, but a transformative *cultural* event that served the telos of modernity.

Augustus Lindley, a British naval officer who lived and fought alongside the Taipings during the early 1860s, was one of the first Western commentators to depict the Taipings as an egalitarian movement. In his account of the rebellion (published in 1866), Lindley pointed to the Taipings' treatment of women to highlight their departure from traditional values and oppressive social institutions in China. The Taipings, he claimed, not only abolished footbinding, prostitution, and the sale of daughters, but also allowed women to enjoy "free intercourse" and a "much higher social position" (see Figures 7.1 and 7.2).[5] Lindley saw this improved status as evidence that the Taipings were introducing modern civilization to China:

> During my intercourse with the Ti-pings, if one part of their system and organization appeared more admirable than another, it was the improved position of their women, whose status, raised from the degrading Asiatic *régime*, approached that of civilized nations. This improvement upon the ignorant and sensual treatment of 2,000 years affords strong evidence of the advancement of their moral character.[6]

Lindley, as this extract reveals, saw the emancipation of women under the Taipings as evidence of their departure from an "Asiatic" system that had oppressed and degraded Chinese women since antiquity. This break with tradition, according to Lindley, highlighted the moral superiority of the Taipings and their spiritual alignment with the "civilized" nations of the West.

Lindley claimed to have based his interpretation of the Taipings on direct experience, but his personal motivation for writing his account (namely, to highlight the immoral nature of British military intervention against the Taipings) made him prone to exaggeration on moral and social questions such as the status of women.[7] Lindley wanted to show

Fig. 7.1 This image shows the sale of a Chinese girl as witnessed by Lindley. The hairstyle of the man (Manchu queue) shows that the sale took place in a non-Taiping territory. The purpose of the image is to highlight one of the oppressive social institutions that the "modern" Taipings were abolishing

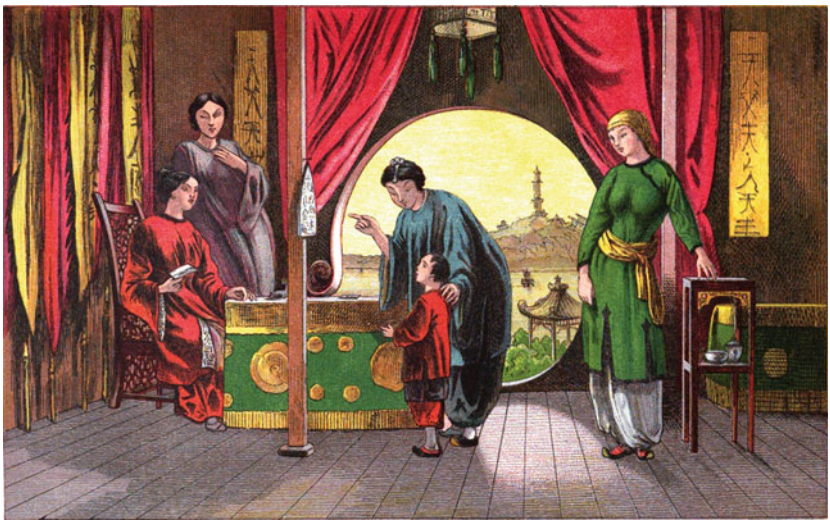

Fig. 7.2 This image shows a Taiping woman teaching the Lord's Prayer to a young child. The image highlights the two most positive features of the Taiping Rebellion in Lindley's mind: the acceptance of Christianity and the emancipation of women. The image also implies a radical shift in attitudes toward children. Rather than viewing children as material assets, the Taipings appear to be committed to their personal and spiritual development

that British collaborators with the Qing dynasty, such as Charles Gordon (1833–85), were helping to suppress not a group of superstitious savages, but rather a civilized Christian movement that deserved the full sympathy of other Christian nations. This political purpose encouraged Lindley to seek out signs of social progress—the most prominent of which was the emancipation of women—and caused him to overlook the more obvious traces of Confucian tradition within Taiping society. Lindley, in other words, filtered his experience of the Taipings (and Taiping women in particular) in order to confirm his politically motivated image of them as agents of progress and modernity.

Although Lindley's political cause died following the suppression of the rebellion, themes from his interpretation continue to find expression in historical scholarship on the Taipings. Building on Levenson's earlier argument (namely, that the Taipings' anti-Confucian challenge included a belief in human equality), a number of historians have claimed that the Taipings were specifically committed to the emancipation of

Chinese women. Jen Yu-wen, in his comprehensive history of the Taiping Rebellion, has argued that the Taipings saw men and women as equals because of their shared identity as children of God.[8] Christian spiritual beliefs, in other words, compelled the Taipings to re-evaluate, and ultimately reject, the patriarchal values that had previously characterized Chinese (or, more specifically, Confucian) social thought. Robert Weller, reflecting the dominance of this assumption in the historiography, has more recently described the Taipings' ideology as "radically egalitarian."[9] Weller has also specifically endorsed the association of the Taipings with gender equality in claiming that the early Taipings abolished footbinding and "allowed women a powerful role."[10]

The Feminine Ideal: Quiet, Submissive, and Chaste

Challenging the popular representation of the Taipings as liberators of Chinese women, this section will discuss the conservative feminine ideal that Hong articulated in the *Poems of the Heavenly Father*. Hong's expectations regarding the conduct of palace women show that he sought not to emancipate them from Confucian bondage, but to inculcate (or reinforce) in them established feminine virtues such as quietness, submissiveness, and chastity. Despite allowing women to enter the "public" sphere as palace officials, Hong and the Taipings still expected them to act in a passive, subservient manner. Such expectations highlight an important overlap between Hong's ideas on feminine virtue and those expressed in the Confucian classics.

One of Hong's main reasons for writing the *Poems of the Heavenly Father* was to standardize and control the behavior of the palace women. Using the threat of chastisement to regulate their conduct, Hong proscribed all behaviors that he considered improper and warned that offenders would be punished in corporal fashion. The first such warning appeared in poems 17 and 18, which listed ten offenses that were punishable by beating:

> [17] Disrespectfulness in service is the first thing punishable by beating. Haughtily refusing to obey instructions is the second thing punishable by beating. Raising the eyes to look at your husband is the third thing punishable by beating. Disrespectfulness in asking instructions of the King is the fourth thing punishable by beating. Rashness and ungraciousness is the fifth thing punishable by beating. [18] Speaking too loudly is the sixth thing punishable by beating. Being able to talk but refusing to respond is the seventh thing punishable by beating. Cheerlessness in appearance is the eighth thing punishable by beating. Casting the eyes to the left or right is the ninth thing

> punishable by beating. Unmannerly speech is the tenth thing punishable by beating.[11]

As the women were obliged to reflect on the Decalogue regularly (poem 265 ordered them to read the Heavenly Commandments on the Sabbath), this list of *ten* offenses would have encouraged them to recognize Hong's stringent rules as genuine laws of God.[12] The women subjected to those new divine laws not only had to respect and obey the Heavenly King, but also had to maintain a pleasing appearance and act in a particularly submissive way. Looking up at the Heavenly King, speaking loudly or improperly, and being cheerless in appearance were now defined as crimes against God.

Hong emphasized the feminine quality of submissiveness in many of the other poems that he wrote for the palace women. Focusing on one of the most obvious displays of submission, poem 197 described the raising of one's eyes (the third of the ten punishable offenses) as "an offense to Heaven" and instructed the women to bow their heads, lower their eyes, and face the Lord (Hong) with faithful hearts.[13] The obligation to be quiet—another key aspect of Hong's feminine ideal—was reiterated in poem 238, which explained that "a delicate voice pleases the Father and a loud voice [the sixth of the ten punishable offenses] offends Heaven."[14] Finally, Hong outlined a third—and more extreme—example of submissive behavior in poems 212 and 343, which discussed the duty of the palace women to be constantly cheerful. According to those poems, the women were obliged to maintain a cheerful appearance even when they were being scolded or lashed.[15] As poem 343 put it, "Even when you are lashed and scolded, you must be cheerful and faithful. If you are not cheerful and faithful [the eighth of the ten punishable offenses], you are committing a dual offense. Do not blame others when the sky is filled with fire."[16] This particular command shows that Hong used his idea of proper feminine behavior, together with the threat of divine retribution, to reinforce his authority within the palace. Forced to be quiet and constantly cheerful, the women had to suppress (or at least conceal) their own thoughts and feelings and devote themselves completely to the service of Hong. In this way, feminine virtue functioned as an instrument of patriarchal domination.

The feminine ideal that Hong articulated in the *Poems of the Heavenly Father* required the palace women to be not only obedient and submissive, but also sexually pure and exclusively committed to their husband.

Although female chastity was a Confucian virtue that was actively promoted by the Qing dynasty, Hong rooted his condemnation of licentiousness in the biblical text and the Ten Commandments in particular. Like many other Taiping publications, the *Poems of the Heavenly Father* instructed its readers to obey the seventh commandment (Taiping version: "Do not commit adultery or be licentious") and warned that all offenders would be executed.[17] Poem 156, referring directly to the biblical prohibition on licentiousness, warned, "If the seventh Heavenly Commandment is violated in the slightest, the sword will fall on the unpardonable crimes."[18] Poem 465 also asserted that the violation of the seventh commandment was the greatest—and most unforgivable—of all moral crimes: "All other crimes may be pardoned. The sole exception shall be the violation of the seventh commandment. The Father has ordered the extermination of the evil and the preservation of the upright."[19] Through these and other similar poems, Hong communicated his sexual authority over the wives and female attendants who resided in the Heavenly Palace.[20] Although Hong was allowed to share himself with multiple women, his wives—as dictated by biblical law—had to dedicate their bodies exclusively to him.

Traces of Tradition: Confucian Themes in Hong's Feminine Ideal

The discussion above should not be taken as evidence that Hong corrupted an early egalitarian doctrine in order to preserve his own authority within the palace. The reality, as official publications show, is that the Taipings proclaimed a hierarchical conception of gender relations from the inception of their rebellion. The *Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature* (1854), as we saw in Chapter 3, associated social harmony with a hierarchical world in which "those above" (*shangzhe*) showed compassion to the lowly and "those below" (*xiazhe*) respected their elders and superiors. The *Poems for the Young* (1851)—one of the Taipings' earliest publications—also promoted hierarchical relationships and specifically affirmed the subordination of women to men. The book not only endorsed the three obediences (*sancong*) and the specific principle of wifely submission, but also prescribed chastity (*zhen*) and domestic seclusion as fundamental components of the "womanly way" (*nüdao*).[21] These gender-specific claims confirm that the feminine ideal in the *Poems of the Heavenly Father* extended, rather than distorted, the early social values of the Taipings. The Taipings believed that all human beings were united as children of God, but they never

proclaimed that men and women—or spiritual siblings in general—were social equals.

Hong's feminine ideal not only extended the early social values of the Taipings, but also reflected established beliefs about the conduct and position of women in late imperial China. The Chinese classics, through patriarchal doctrines such as the three obediences (*sancong*) and the four virtues (*side*), promoted modesty and submission as quintessential feminine virtues. The three obediences—a doctrine that became popular in the late imperial period—instructed women to obey their fathers, their husbands, and later (as widows) their sons.[22] The four virtues, which was the ideological partner of the three obediences, taught women to exhibit modesty in their behavior (womanly virtue), offend nobody with their words (womanly speech), maintain personal hygiene (womanly appearance), and devote themselves to spinning, weaving, and the preparation of food and wine (womanly work).[23] The archetypal Confucian woman was, therefore, modest and obedient in her character and conduct. During the late imperial period, this feminine archetype (in particular, the association of women with demure behavior) was accepted not only by ladies of respectable families, but also by the majority of ordinary Chinese women.[24] Thus, Hong's wives and female attendants were far from unique in adopting (or being forced to adopt) a quiet and submissive demeanor. Rather, they were following a standard pattern of behavior that was rooted in classical representations of feminine virtue.

Hong's emphasis on chastity and sexual control, like his construction of a quiet and submissive femininity, was consistent with the patriarchal worldview of late imperial China. Although Chinese men were allowed only one legal wife, they were permitted—and even encouraged by Confucian ideology—to take concubines for reproductive purposes.[25] A Chinese man, because of the moral pressure to produce sons (who would continue the family line and sacrifice to the ancestors), could justify having numerous sexual partners as an act of filial piety. However, a Chinese woman, in order to guarantee her son's paternal origin (and thus his legitimacy as the inheritor of patrilineal authority), was only allowed to be sexually intimate with one man. This expectation was spatially reinforced through the doctrine of separate spheres, which dictated that a man's domain was the outer/social world and a woman's domain was the inner/domestic world. Other methods of controlling the sexuality of women included restricting their contact with male relatives within the family and stigmatizing widows who wished to remarry as potentially pro-

miscuous women.[26] At the same time, widows who refused to remarry were celebrated by the Chinese state as moral exemplars and embodiments of Confucian virtue. The Qing dynasty issued honorific tablets to such women and even paid for the construction of chastity shrines and memorial arches to commemorate chaste widows.[27] Thus, Hong's discourses on chastity and the seventh commandment expose not his *unique* desire for sexual control over women, but rather his continued attachment to Confucian morality and the patriarchal world in which he lived.

Instructional books for women further highlight the overlap between Hong's feminine ideal and established Confucian beliefs. During the late imperial period, the most popular and influential works of this genre were Ban Zhao's *Admonitions for Women* (*Nüjie*) and Song Ruozhao's *Analects for Women* (*Nü lunyu*). These texts, which acted as the voice of orthodox Confucian womanhood, emphasized the feminine virtues of modesty, obedience, and chastity and idealized the wife who attended to domestic work and respectfully served her husband. The *Analects for Women*, for example, offered the following instructions on chastity and womanly conduct:

> To be a woman, you must first learn how to establish yourself as a person. The way to do this is simply by working hard to establish one's purity and chastity.... When walking, don't turn your head; when talking, don't open your mouth wide; when sitting, don't move your knees; when standing, don't rustle your skirts; when happy, don't exult with loud laughter; when angry, don't raise your voice.[28]

The same text also instructed women to "obey whatever your husband tells you" and offered specific advice on serving the father-in-law.[29] A respectful wife, it explained, would not only obey the orders of her father-in-law, but would also avoid looking at him directly or engaging him in conversation.[30] These various instructions from the *Analects for Women* confirm that Hong was not especially original in demanding quietness, submissiveness, and chastity from the palace women. The instructions also reveal that some of Hong's specific behavioral regulations (for example, speaking quietly and looking down while talking to him) had direct precedents in Confucian literature on the "wifely way" (*fudao*).

The *Instructions for the Inner Quarters* (*Neixun*) is another instructional book that shows the Confucian roots of Hong's feminine ideal. Written by the Ming Empress Xu (wife of the Yongle emperor, r. 1403–

24), the book describes the feminine virtues and behavioral norms that she had previously studied under her mother-in-law, the Empress Ma (wife of Ming Taizu, r. 1368–98). Although the Empress Ma emphasized the education and moral cultivation of women, the text shows that she upheld the established notion of their inherently submissive nature and natural subordination to men. The *Instructions for the Inner Quarters* not only defined the way of the husband and wife as "the principle of the strong and the weak," but also explicitly asserted that "the wife is one who follows her husband."[31] Significantly, the work also associated the moral nature of women with submissive characteristics such as modesty, reserve, quietness, filial piety, respectfulness, meekness, and gentleness.[32] Although these characteristics were presented in philosophical (Neo-Confucian) terms and not imposed through an explicit threat of violence (as in the *Poems of the Heavenly Father*), they nonetheless show that Hong's feminine ideal conformed to a pre-existing standard of womanhood that prevailed in late imperial China. The *Instructions for the Inner Quarters* also specifically confirms that the codification of feminine virtues for the instruction of palace women was not a Taiping innovation, but an established imperial tradition that Hong developed for his own purposes.

The account of Zhang Guanglie, whose reflections have been carefully examined by Tobie Meyer-Fong, further illustrates the Confucian roots of Hong's feminine ideal. In 1861, when he was only seven years old, Zhang witnessed the murder of his mother at the hands of a Taiping soldier. Zhang's mother received state honors following her death, but Zhang also commemorated her personally through a compilation of materials that he published in 1880 (and later, following the addition of new materials, in 1884 and 1890).[33] The most interesting feature of that compilation, from the perspective of this study, is the way in which Zhang represented his mother's virtue. Portraying his mother as the ideal Confucian woman, Zhang associated her with established feminine virtues such as chastity, gentleness, frugality, diligence, graciousness, modesty, and quietness. He also emphasized her domestic strengths in managing the household (in particular, providing food and clothing) and encouraging her sons and daughters to study and sew respectively.[34] This representation, which associated Zhang's mother with state-sanctioned values and the gender orthodoxy of Confucianism, highlights his great effort to portray his mother as "a virtuous woman worthy of commemoration."[35] Significantly, the virtues that he identified in his mother (in particular, modesty, quietness, and

chastity) match the core elements of Hong's feminine ideal. His account thus confirms that Hong's expectations regarding the behavior of palace women conformed to a model of womanly conduct that remained prevalent in the late nineteenth century.

Palace Duties: Serving and Defending the Heavenly King

The *Poems of the Heavenly Father* not only outlined Hong's feminine ideal, but also discussed the specific duties that he expected his wives and female attendants to perform within the palace. Those functions, like Hong's feminine ideal, confirm that he was not a prototypical liberator of Chinese women, but the advocate of a hierarchical social order in which women were subservient to men.

Many of Hong's poems show that he viewed the palace women as personal servants whose primary function was to keep him clean, well groomed, and comfortable at all times. Hong expected the women not only to bathe him, dress him, arrange his hair, and look after his beard (poems 200 and 485), but also to monitor his temperature, adjust his clothing (for example, providing more clothing when it was cold), and fan him throughout the day (poems 217 and 425).[36] Bathing and dressing both required close contact, but the women's most intimate duty was to massage the body of the Heavenly King. Poem 364 instructed the women to massage Hong's head and feet in the morning and the evening.[37] A separate poem shows that Hong also reserved five daily appointments for ankle, arm, and knee massages. The responsibility for administering those five sets of massages was shared between supervisors, deputy supervisors, and palace maids of various kinds.[38] The purpose of such ritualized massages was not only to provide physical relief for Hong's muscles and joints, but also to underline the women's collective duty to serve the Heavenly King and satisfy his every need. The massages, in other words, symbolized and reinforced the master-servant relationship that existed between Hong and the palace women.

Further evidence of a master-servant relationship can be found in poem 416, which asserted that "each man's wife should pull her husband's carriage."[39] Developing this general command, poems 422 and 423 described the correct procedure for pulling the carriage of the Heavenly King. As the following extract shows, Hong's female attendants had to handle the carriage (and the body that it contained) with the utmost care:

> [422] The two sides of the carriage you must not touch. Come near and extend the traces, and then pull. When the traces are straight, the carriage is straight. Walk slowly in rhythmic pace, the heart full of joy.... Be composed and firm and careful with hands and feet. In the front and in the rear, drive the carriage without bouncing. [423] In pulling the carriage, face the front and proceed along the road. When you come to an obstacle, look back and seek a smooth detour. Roaming in the imperial garden is indeed a joyful matter, with hundreds of birds making music to accompany the sound of the carriage.[40]

This extract suggests that Hong's female attendants pulled his carriage for leisurely rides through the imperial garden. Hong's employment of women in this way, and his suggestion that such servile work was appropriate for wives (poem 416), problematizes the popular conception of the Taipings as liberators of Chinese women. It also suggests that the Taipings' prohibition of footbinding was not part of a campaign to destroy Confucian patriarchy and equalize men and women as children of God. Hong proscribed the practice not only because it conflicted with the customs of his ethnic group (the Hakka), but also because fully mobile women could work for the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom as soldiers and servants.[41]

Besides massaging and transporting the Heavenly King, the palace women were expected to demonstrate their loyalty to him by reporting the wrongdoings, suspicious activities, and treacherous schemes of their spiritual sisters. Unsurprisingly, Hong emphasized this obligation throughout the *Poems of the Heavenly Father*, which was published only a year after the execution of Yang Xiuqing and his "treacherous" followers. In poem 99, Hong ordered the women to report criminal sentiments and warned that the sword would "fly" if anyone concealed evidence of a scheme.[42] A similar threat was made in poem 221, which declared that those who failed to report the misconduct of others would be "exiled and permanently degraded."[43] To encourage the more reluctant women to report their fellow workers, poem 293 asserted that failing to offer information was the same as "deceiving Heaven" (*man Tian*).[44] Hong thus presented informers not as unfaithful friends or untrustworthy colleagues, but as loyal followers of the God who had personally chosen him to rule as the Heavenly King. By emphasizing this higher spiritual loyalty, Hong enabled the palace women to rationalize the betrayal of a colleague or friend as an act of obedience to God.

To underline the obligation of the women to serve Hong faithfully, the *Poems of the Heavenly Father* outlined the various types of disobedience for which a woman could be executed. Firstly, poem 424 explained that women who were self-willed and "disobeyed Heaven" (*ni Tian*) would be killed, without detailing the mode of execution.[45] Poems 331 and 333 were more explicit, recommending dismemberment by five horses (*wu ma fen*) as the penalty for any woman found guilty of vilification, blasphemy, or irreverence (that is, failing to kneel at the appropriate moment).[46] Other poems declared that decapitation was the appropriate punishment for boldness (poem 391), deception (poem 442), and "disobedience to edicts" (*ni zhi*; poems 370 and 441).[47] Significantly, poem 485 reveals that a seemingly trivial mistake could easily have been classified as a violation of edicts by Hong. In that poem, Hong instructed the women as follows:

> Be careful, keep at a distance, and look after my beard. Easily, lightly, massage near the navel. Not to be careful near the navel is to disobey edicts [*ni zhi*]. For the Lord, there should be ten thousand sorts of consideration and attention.[48]

Besides highlighting another area of Hong's body that the palace women had to massage, this poem shows that Hong defined the crime of disobedience to edicts extremely loosely. As violation of edicts was a capital offense, this loose definition effectively forced the palace women to be mindful of everything they did, as the slightest mistake could lead to accusations of disobedience and calls for their execution.

The *Poems of the Heavenly Father* encouraged obedience among the palace women not only by categorizing various acts of disobedience as capital offenses, but also by presenting Hong's proclamations as divine laws that were equal in authority to the Heavenly Commandments. Like many of the Taipings' official publications, the book associated obedience to the Ten Commandments with the enjoyment of eternal life in heaven.[49] Poem 416, for example, declared, "If you always obey the Heavenly Commandments, you shall live forever."[50] A more unusual feature of the book was the emphasis that it placed on the moral and spiritual benefits of obedience to Hong's edicts. Poem 408, for example, explained that individuals who wished to develop their moral characters and "become real human beings" had to obey the Heavenly Commandments *and* Hong's edicts.[51] Poem 418 also highlighted the soteriological significance of the edicts by equating them with the will of God: "It is always desirable to

obey the Father's sacred edicts. The words of your husband and Lord are spoken for the Father. Obey the edicts and you shall be saved."[52] By presenting Hong's edicts as an extension of divine law, these poems encouraged the palace women to submit unconditionally to Hong and accept everything he said as the will of God. Those who disobeyed Hong were thus committing not only a political crime against their sovereign, but also a spiritual crime against their God.

Patriarchal Authority: Political Motives and Ideological Justifications

Hong, as the analysis above confirms, made a desperate attempt to reassert his authority following the fratricidal chaos of 1856. As Yang Xiuqing had defended the rights of the palace women during his charismatic performances (for example, ordering Hong to be more lenient with female officials and not to kick or lash his wives), Hong may have feared that some of his wives and female attendants were covert Yang loyalists who would attempt to undermine his authority within the palace.[53] To overcome this internal "threat," Hong's book of five hundred poems emphasized that every woman had a spiritual obligation to obey and faithfully serve him as their "husband and Lord" (*fuzhu*).[54] The book also ordered the palace women to report any individual whom they suspected of having treacherous intentions. Such orders suggest that Hong's decision to publish a book of behavioral regulations was part of a broader effort to control his subordinates and maintain his authority following the execution of Yang. Hong seems to have believed that the way to avoid another treacherous challenge was to reassert his natural superiority and tighten his grip on the people around him at Nanjing.

Although the Nanjing episode encouraged Hong to publish the *Poems of the Heavenly Father*, it was not responsible for the emergence of his patriarchal values. Those values, which had been expressed (albeit less meticulously) in official publications before 1856, were actually the product of Hong's socio-cultural background as a classically trained scholar. As previous chapters have shown, Hong's study of the Chinese classics encouraged him to internalize core Confucian values that he would later use (even after consciously rejecting Confucianism) to reinterpret biblical texts, symbols, and laws. Significantly, specific extracts from the *Poems of the Heavenly Father* suggest that Hong's patriarchal values were also inspired—or at least reinforced—by his tendency to interpret biblical laws

from a Confucian perspective. The Nanjing episode simply encouraged Hong to articulate those values more explicitly and meticulously.

The *Poems of the Heavenly Father* justified its patriarchal expectations through both Christian and Confucian ethical discourses. In his first contribution to the collection (poem 11), Hong associated his core behavioral regulations with the second great commandment of Christianity ("You shall love your neighbor as yourself"; Mark 12:31).[55] That biblical commandment concluded his list of ten essential laws for the palace women:

1. Cultivate uprightness.
2. Obey the edicts.
3. Listen to the second elder sister's [Hong's wife] instructions.
4. Sisters must be harmonious.
5. Be faithful and cheerful.
6. Purify your heart.
7. Purify your appearance.
8. Purify your voice.
9. Do not be covetous.
10. Love others as yourself.[56]

These ten basic laws encompass the various aspects of Hong's feminine ideal and highlight the respectful and obedient attitude that he expected all of the palace women to possess. Although such expectations reflected established themes from Confucian ethics, the final command and the presentation of the laws as a group of ten (also seen in poems 17 and 18) expose Hong's subtle attempt to communicate their biblical origins and divine authority.

Hong further justified the duty of the palace women to obey and serve him through the Confucian doctrine of the five relationships (*wulun*). That doctrine, as we saw in Chapter 4, taught that social order was maintained when (1) ministers loyally served their sovereign, (2) sons revered their fathers, (3) younger brothers respected their elder brothers, (4) wives obeyed their husbands, and (5) friends were mutually faithful. This conception of human relationships not only inspired Hong's understanding of God's relation to his sons, but also acted as an ideological justification for his patriarchal system. In the *Poems of the Heavenly Father*, Hong repeatedly instructed the palace women to obey him as their "husband and Lord" (implying two forms of subjection).[57] He also explicitly endorsed the Confucian view of relationships in poem 475. After outlining the respec-

tive duties of sons, younger brothers, and ministers to revere their fathers, elder brothers, and sovereigns, Hong declared that an "inferior" (*xia*) who failed to revere their "superior" (*shang*) violated the "natural relationships" (*Tianlun*).[58] Hong, as this particular poem shows, used Confucian ethical discourses to suggest that the palace women were his natural inferiors. According to this hierarchical classification, Hong's wives and female attendants had a moral obligation to serve and obey him as their "husband and Lord" respectively. Confucian relationships (as interpreted by Hong) thus provided another cultural justification for patriarchal domination at Nanjing.

Just as Christian missionaries and scholars have accused Hong of distorting Christianity, so too scholars of Confucianism might accuse him of misunderstanding Confucian ethics. Such interpreters might point to classical statements on reciprocal duties to challenge the idea—implicit in Hong's writings—that Confucianism promoted a hierarchical system of relationships. The problem with this interpretation is that it not only overlooks the endorsement of hierarchy (alongside reciprocity) within the classics, but also disconnects Confucian ethics from the interpretive world of late imperial China.

Although the *Mencius* defined the five relationships in terms of reciprocal duties (for example, mutual affection [*qin*] between father and son and righteousness [*yi*] between sovereign and minister), it implied a hierarchy of age in claiming that "between old and young, [there should be] a proper order" (*zhangyou youxu*).[59] The *Classic of Filial Piety*, in discussing the exemplary person's (*junzi*) service of the ruler, also suggested that reciprocal duties were characteristic of hierarchical relationships: "Hence, as the superior and inferior, they are able to have an affection [*qin*] for each other."[60] The *Book of Rites* similarly defined righteousness (*yi*)—the second reciprocal duty in the *Mencius*—as a state in which the "noble and lowly [*guijian*] all have the services which they discharge throughout the kingdom."[61] These various extracts from Chinese classical texts suggested that reciprocal duties were moral obligations within a hierarchical social order. Individuals might have been expected to act affectionately or righteously toward one another, but they would have expressed such affection and righteousness in different ways that were illustrative of their relative statuses (as "superior and inferior" or "noble and lowly") within society. Reciprocity did not, in other words, undermine the hierarchical nature of human relationships.[62]

More importantly for this study, a hierarchical interpretation that emphasized the moral obligations of subordinates prevailed during the late imperial period. According to the Six Maxims of Ming Taizu (r. 1368–98), which acted as the foundation for moral instruction in villages during the Ming and Qing dynasties, the basic duties of the people were (1) to be filial and obedient to one's father and mother (*xiaoshun fumu*), (2) to respect elders and superiors (*zunjing zhangshang*), (3) to live in harmony with neighbors, (4) to instruct and discipline children and grandchildren, (5) to be content with one's occupation, and (6) to commit no wrongful acts.[63] Rather than outlining a series of reciprocal duties (for example, mutual affection or righteousness), these six moral maxims emphasize submission and respect for parents, elders, and superiors. It is this hierarchical and somewhat authoritarian interpretation that appears to have shaped Hong's thinking about "natural relationships." Whereas Ming Taizu used it to inculcate loyalty and obedience in ordinary subjects at the village level, Hong employed it to demand total submission from his wives, female officials, and female attendants within the palace.

One of the poems in Hong's collection suggests that his patriarchal values were confirmed, rather than challenged, by his reading of the biblical text. Highlighting a particular source of inspiration from the Decalogue, poem 302 referred to the fifth commandment in discussing the obedience of wives:

> The Ten Heavenly Commandments must all be obeyed. If you violate the fifth or the seventh, you shall be dismembered for your crime. I implore you to cultivate an upright spirit and obey the Father's edicts. Most important is to be filial [*xiao*], obedient [*shun*], and to follow the natural relationships [*Tianlun*].[64]

This passage suggests that Hong interpreted the fifth commandment (Taiping version: "Be filial and obedient to your father and mother," *xiaoshun fumu*) as a general command to "follow the natural relationships" and obey one's superiors.[65] As filial piety (*xiao*) was the foundational duty of the five relationships, Hong—a classically trained scholar—may have seen in the fifth commandment not only the duty of a child to honor their parents, but also the duty of a minister to serve their sovereign, the duty of a younger brother to respect his elder brother, and the duty of a wife to obey her husband. In other words, the fifth commandment may have encouraged Hong, because of his Confucian cultural background, to asso-

ciate hierarchy and patriarchy with the moral will of God.[66] Armed with this Confucianized interpretation, Hong was able to present both adultery (covered by the seventh commandment) and wifely disobedience as violations of biblical law.

Conclusion: Patriarchy and Confucianization

The analysis of this chapter has shown that the Taipings, and Hong Xiuquan in particular, embraced a patriarchal worldview in which women were seen as naturally subservient to men. The *Poems of the Heavenly Father* not only instructed the palace women to be quiet, submissive, and chaste, but also outlined the various duties that Hong expected them to perform within the Heavenly Palace. The most noteworthy chores included grooming the Heavenly King, massaging various parts of his body, and pulling his carriage for leisurely rides through the imperial garden. The basic purpose of the text, as evidenced by these chores, was to underline the duty of the palace women to serve and obey Hong—their "husband and Lord"—unconditionally. The text also used the threat of violence in suggesting that any woman who disobeyed or disrespected Hong would be beaten or executed for her crime.

Hong's feminine ideal and the specific duties of the palace women show that he maintained the patriarchal values that prevailed in late imperial China. The classical texts that Hong read as an aspiring scholar promoted wifely submission and modesty through the three obediences and the four virtues. Popular instructional books, such as Ban Zhao's *Admonitions for Women* and Song Ruozhao's *Analects for Women*, also emphasized the feminine virtues of modesty, obedience, and chastity. The Chinese state even commemorated chaste widows as embodiments of Confucian virtue, issuing honorific tablets and paying for the construction of chastity shrines and memorial arches. Hong's preoccupation with feminine virtues such as quietness, submissiveness, and chastity thus reveals not his unique desire for power and control over women, but rather his continued attachment to Confucian morality and the gender orthodoxy of late imperial China.

Although Hong's patriarchal values reflected established themes from Confucian ethics, specific poems show that he sought to convey their *biblical* origins to the palace women. Hong not only followed the biblical model in presenting his behavioral rules as a set of ten laws (seen in both the positive laws of poem 11 and the negative laws of poems 17 and 18), but also associated the fifth commandment with the broader

(and evidently Confucian) obligation to "follow the natural relationships." That association, like the analysis of the Taipings' ethical system in Chapter 5, highlights Hong's tendency to interpret biblical laws from a Confucian perspective. As filial piety was the foundational duty of the Confucian system of relationships, Hong seems to have found in the fifth commandment a divine sanction not only for filial reverence, but also for cognate virtues such as wifely obedience. Hong's patriarchal values thus support the broader argument that his ethical system was shaped by a Confucianized interpretation of biblical laws.

Besides highlighting further evidence of Confucianization, the analysis of this chapter challenges one of the most popular assumptions in the existing literature on the Taiping Rebellion. Many Chinese and Western scholars, for different ideological reasons, have previously represented the Taipings as an egalitarian movement. According to Lindley and other Western interpreters, the Taipings were champions of gender equality who sought to destroy Confucian culture and replace it with "modern" civilization. This interpretation, which rests on the Taipings' belief in the brotherhood of humankind, not only confuses spiritual unity with social equality, but also completely overlooks the endorsement of hierarchy and patriarchy in the Taipings' official publications. Such evidence, which can be seen most clearly in the *Poems of the Heavenly Father*, confirms that the Taipings were neither liberators of Chinese women nor destroyers of Confucian tradition. Rather, their new religious world shows that they incorporated Confucian values and imposed on Chinese women a new Christianized, and biblically sanctioned, form of subservience.

CHAPTER 8

Conclusion

An Early Form of Localized Christianity in China

The analysis of this study has shown that the Taipings localized Christianity in their theology, ethics, and ritual practices. More specifically, the analysis has revealed that both national (classical) and regional (popular) influences contributed to the development of their localized form of Christianity. This key observation highlights the complex and multifaceted nature of the localization process, which was initiated and directed by individuals of diverse socio-cultural backgrounds.

The impact of Confucianism—the belief system that Hong originally studied as an aspiring scholar—can be seen throughout the Taipings' religious world. The Taipings' vision of world salvation (Chapter 3), which demanded the restoration of China's *ancient* God and the creation of a Confucianized Kingdom of Heaven on earth, shows that Hong interpreted the deity (Shangdi) and concepts (*Tianguo*) that he met in the Chinese Christian literature from a classical perspective. Similarly, the Taipings' doctrine of God (Chapter 4) confirms that Hong's specific theological beliefs (in particular, the belief that Shangdi was a singular deity consisting of the Heavenly Father alone) were inspired by concepts and values derived from the classical texts of Confucianism. The Taipings' ethical system (Chapter 5) further highlights the contribution of those classical texts to the development of their localized form of Christianity. Although the Taipings equated moral goodness with obedience to the Ten Commandments, Hong and other Taiping writers articulated those

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biblical laws within a Confucian ethical framework that emphasized the goodness of human nature, self-cultivation toward uprightness, and filial piety. The final chapter extended this observation in showing that Hong's patriarchal values were also shaped—or at least reinforced—by his tendency to interpret biblical laws (in this case, the fifth commandment) from a Confucian perspective. Taken together, these various elements from the Taipings' theology and ethics confirm that Confucianism—the national orthodoxy of late imperial China—acted as one of the principal instruments of localization in the Taipings' religious world.

In addition to classical texts and values, popular religious influences made a significant contribution to the Taipings' localized form of Christianity. Firstly, Hong's anthropomorphic image of the Heavenly Father (Chapter 4) reveals that the symbolism and conventions of Chinese popular religion helped to shape his ideas about the biblical God. The Heavenly Father not only had a physical body, a beard, and a scholarly robe, but also enjoyed the company of a female consort and children in heaven. In this respect, the God of the Taipings was noticeably similar to the popular deities that they vehemently denounced as demons. The Taipings' sacrificial and charismatic rituals (Chapter 6) further highlight the impact of popular traditions on their localized religious world. Just as the Taipings' sacrificial offerings to Shangdi incorporated popular ritual symbols, so too their charismatic (communication and healing) rituals expressed the power of their God through shamanistic practices derived from the popular religious world of south China. These key examples not only demonstrate that popular and regional influences shaped the Taipings' localized form of Christianity, but also confirm that localization was not the product of a conscious attempt to maintain an indigenous cultural identity. The Taipings rejected Confucianism and all expressions of popular religion, but those traditions nonetheless inspired their religious practices and their interpretations of Christian texts and symbols. To understand this paradox of the localization process, we need to consider both the identity claims of individuals and the broader cultural contexts under which their intellectual perspectives were formed.

Some of the most important examples of localization in the Taipings' theological worldview were inspired by terms from the Chinese Christian literature. The term Shangdi, which Medhurst and his co-translators used as the name for God in Chinese, was central to the Taipings' soteriological vision and doctrine of God. The term (due to its use in the classics as a designation for the ruling deity) not only lay behind Hong's claim that he was restoring the God of ancient China, but also encouraged him to view

that God as a singular and non-Trinitarian deity. Similarly, references to God and Jesus as Father (Fu) and son (*zi*) in Liang's *Good Words* and the Chinese Bible contributed to the Taipings' localized beliefs about God. On a popular religious level, the suggestion that God had fathered a son may have encouraged Hong to view Shangdi as the partner of a Heavenly Mother and the head of a celestial family. Jesus' identity as the son of God also confirmed, from Hong's Confucianized perspective, that he was a non-divine being who was naturally *inferior* to the Heavenly Father in status. According to Hong, the theological idea that the Son was a divine *equal* of the Father violated proper relationships and stripped the latter of the dignity and honor that he deserved as a father. These examples from the Taipings' theology show how terms in vernacularized Christian books can connect the religion to pre-existing cultural assumptions and thereby facilitate localization.

Themes from the Chinese Christian literature also contributed to the localized beliefs and practices of the Taipings. Hong's twofold mission to "exterminate the evil and preserve the upright" was inspired not only by the apocalyptic (demon-slaying) imagery of Revelation 12, but also by the biblical record of divine interventions in the world (in particular, the Great Flood and the Exodus). Significantly, the Taipings' allusions to a particular passage from the *Book of History* suggest that this twofold mission may have originated in Hong's recognizing the overlap between biblical narratives of divine intervention and the classical idea that Shangdi sent blessings *and* miseries on the people of the world. The ritual practices of the Taipings reveal two other possible examples of their responding to thematic overlaps, or points of contact, between the biblical text and the indigenous (in this case, popular) cultural world. Just as the Old Testament told Hong that it was acceptable to worship God through popular sacrificial symbols (roast pork, rice, and tea), so too the New Testament's record of Christian charismata suggested that shamanistic rituals (communication and healing) could be used to convey the will and power of God in the world. These particular text-world overlaps suggest that the Taipings (in particular, Yang Xiuqing) may have been drawn to biblical rituals that would allow them to present the Christian God to their followers in *locally* meaningful ways.

Some readers may be questioning whether it is useful, or even justifiable, to regard the Taipings—a group that reinterpreted the Christian religion to such a great extent—as Christians. Those who equate Christianity with the essentials of orthodoxy (namely, the Chalcedonian definition and

the Trinity) might dismiss the Taipings as heterodox or unchristian, while others will view the interactions with Confucianism and popular religion as evidence of a syncretic religion. Both of these interpretations do not, however, allow the Taipings to speak for themselves. The Taipings not only associated themselves with Christianity by claiming that Western countries had continuously followed the "great path" of God, but also emphasized their unity with other God-worshipping civilizations by addressing visiting missionaries as "foreign brothers."[1] The Taipings affirmed that the biblical Father was the historical God of the Chinese people, acknowledged the spiritual authority of the Christian scriptures (over the classics and other ancient religious writings), and created a moral system that revolved around the Ten Commandments.[2] Hong and his followers also recognized the suffering and death of Jesus as soteriologically significant events. They rejected the idea that Jesus was divine, but emphasized his centrality by suggesting that he was the greatest individual after the Heavenly Father. In contrast to this *conscious* association with Christian symbols and texts, the Taipings' condemnation of Confucius, the classics, and all forms of popular religion shows that they were not attempting to combine various cultural elements into a syncretic religion.[3] Classical and popular religious influences were simply part of the cultural lens through which Hong and the Taipings interpreted their new Christian symbols and texts. The outcome of that locally shaped way of seeing was the development of new meanings and the emergence of an early form of localized Christianity in China.

Beyond Dichotomies: The Taipings' Place in Modern Chinese History

Recognizing the religious identity of the Taipings (as a localized Christian movement) problematizes some of the dominant interpretations of their place and significance in modern Chinese history. Firstly, the analysis of this study shows that labels such as peasant rebels (a favorite of the Chinese historiography) and anti-Manchu nationalists obscure the Taipings' religious world and simplify the nature of their rebellion. These labels, which support linear historical narratives about the decline of feudalism or the emergence of a modern Chinese national consciousness, conceal the most unique and fundamental feature of the Taiping Rebellion: namely, the *religious* mission to restore the God of ancient China. That particular objective, which stemmed from Hong's encounter with the Chinese Christian literature

(in particular, the title Shangdi), energized the Taiping rebels and provided the principal justification (over class- or ethnicity-based arguments) for their revolutionary crusade. The Taipings rejected the imperial order not because of its feudal character, but because the emperor—as Thomas Reilly has previously shown—had usurped the position and title of God. They condemned the ruling Manchus not simply because they were ethnically non-Chinese (though ethnic differences were certainly emphasized in some of the Taipings' publications), but because they—like many *Chinese* dynasties before them—had obstinately rejected Shangdi and worshipped false gods. These religious justifications for hostility are easily overlooked if our purpose in studying the Taipings is to find historical roots for later revolutions, whether Nationalist or Communist.

The Taipings' localized form of Christianity not only problematizes class- and ethnicity-centered interpretations of their identity, but also challenges the tradition-modernity paradigm into which they have previously been absorbed. According to Joseph Levenson and other advocates of the tradition-modernity paradigm, the Taipings represented a fundamental break with the indigenous cultural world of China. They were the carriers of Christian modernity and the destroyers of Confucian tradition. The problem with this interpretation, which supports the broader historical narrative that Western modernity was the driving force of recent Chinese history, is that it conceals the *interaction* of Christianity and Confucianism in the Taipings' theological worldview.[4] Although the Taipings overtly condemned Confucianism and the classics, the new religious world that they created was shaped to a considerable degree by the beliefs and values of that indigenous tradition. Moreover, the Taipings' revolutionary mission (namely, to restore the God of ancient China and eliminate all usurpers of his position) was the product of a terminological overlap between the translated Bible and the Chinese classics. That mission also confirms that Hong and his followers saw the adoption of Christianity as a way to *realize*, rather than destroy, an ancient (and classically recorded) Chinese cultural tradition. Thus, the Taipings' unique religious worldview challenges the popular dichotomies of modern Chinese history (Confucian/Christian, tradition/modernity, China/West) and shows that cultural interaction could provide the ideological impetus for revolutionary change.

Although this study challenges the absorption of the Taipings into linear historical narratives, it does not deny that the Taipings' localized form of Christianity has a wider conceptual significance for the study of modern China. The Taipings were the first group in the modern (post-Opium War)

period to consume, localize, and mobilize a foreign system of thought in their search for a stronger, revitalized China. This phenomenon, which is also common to the Nationalist and Communist revolutions, suggests that processual concepts such as global diffusion and localization can help to explain and connect the revolutionary developments of recent Chinese history. Rather than trying to combine discrete historical events under one *telos* (such as socialism, Han national revival, or modernity), these concepts simply highlight the common *process* by which new visions of China were formulated in the modern period. This alternative perspective, in contrast to existing linear histories, pays full attention to the critical differences of origin, inspiration (especially ideological), and ambition that separate the major revolutionary events of modern Chinese history. It allows us to recognize not only how those different historical events were shaped by the coming together of external (global) and internal (local) forces, but also how those interactions produced unique worldviews that represented totally different trajectories for modern China.[5]

World Christianity: Re-evaluating the Cultural Imperialism Paradigm

The analysis of this study provides an alternative perspective not only on the Taipings' place in modern Chinese history, but also on the cultural impact of Christian missions and the nature of world Christianity. As we saw in the introduction, the writings of anthropologists and historians who view missionaries as cultural imperialists have produced general—and highly misleading—assumptions about the role of the Christian religion in the era of global missions. Two of the most dominant assumptions in this critical historiography of missions are: (1) translated Christian books were instruments of missionary *control*; and (2) the global dissemination of the Christian religion has resulted in cultural *destruction* (or genocide) around the world. Although Christian missions may have acted as controlling and culturally destructive institutions in certain places historically, this study has shown that these negative characteristics cannot fully explain the cultural impact of the missionaries' work. The Taipings' encounter with Christianity confirms that vernacularized Christian texts could empower local readers, reinforce their sense of ownership over Christianity, and—most importantly—facilitate the localization of the Christian religion in its new cultural setting. As indigenous cultures are bound up with and expressed through indigenous languages, the missionaries' use of the

vernacular inevitably created points of contact between the biblical text and the cultural world of its local readers. Those overlaps (terminological and thematic), as the religion of the Taipings illustrates, could encourage local converts to find new meanings and significance in biblical texts, concepts, and symbols. Vernacularized texts, in other words, promoted not the destruction of indigenous cultures, but rather the localization of Christianity through those cultures. This key observation, which rests on a distinction between the *intentions* of missionaries (who often associated conversion with the renunciation of indigenous culture) and the *results* of their work, accounts for the staggering diversity of belief and practice that characterizes world Christianity.[6]

The fundamental relationship between language and culture (or vernacularization and localization), which we saw most clearly in Hong's response to the translated name of God (Shangdi), undermines the belief that the most natural and proper response to the texts of Christianity is to reproduce an "orthodox" and "universal" form of the religion. This essentialist perspective, which indirectly sustains the association of global missions with cultural destruction, is inconsistent with the historical reality of Christianity constantly transforming in response to new cultural worlds. This transformative process started with the early conversion of Greek-speaking gentiles to Christianity, which introduced Greek ideas and intellectual discourses into a religion that was previously dominated by Jewish people and concepts.[7] Seeing such cultural transformations—rather than a set of absolute and universally applicable truths—as a defining characteristic of Christianity, this study has shown that it makes more sense to look at the religion as a set of semantically *flexible* texts and symbols that inspire different people in different ways. Although it is hard to imagine a Christianity without Jesus (the central symbol) or the books through which his life and teachings were transmitted, it is possible, as the analysis of this study has shown, to imagine a Christianity without the Chalcedonian definition and the doctrine of the Trinity. This alternative perspective, which moves beyond the old orthodox-heterodox binary, allows us to acknowledge variant forms of Christianity (including that of the Taipings) as *legitimate* responses to vernacularized Christian literature. By allowing those variant forms a place in the history of world Christianity, we will arrive at a more complex understanding of the religion's encounter with local cultures around the world. Rather than equating the global dissemination of Christian texts and symbols with the creation of a culturally homogeneous world, our work will show that the cross-cultural

process (translating Christian texts into local languages and transplanting Christian symbols in new cultural environments) has made Christianity a semantically diverse, glocal religion.

The case of the Taipings provides a model of localization that may apply to other examples of localized Christianity, both historical and contemporary. The first stage in the Taipings' encounter with Christianity was the global *diffusion* of Christian texts and symbols. Protestant missionaries, inspired by the evangelical revivals, spread the Christian religion centrifugally from the core regions of Europe and North America to new mission fields such as China. The next step in the localization process was the *vernacularization* of Christian books. This characteristically Protestant work, which was started by Robert Morrison following his arrival at Guangzhou in 1807, resulted in the production of several vernacular Bibles and numerous religious tracts in the Chinese language. The *dissemination* of the vernacularized Christian literature was the next step, whereby the translated texts were spread outward from the center of missionary activity (that is, Guangzhou) to other parts of the Chinese interior. Chinese assistants (for example, members of Gützlaff's Chinese Union) played a critical role in the distribution of vernacularized Christian literature, but foreign missionaries also actively spread their texts within Guangzhou. Two foreign missionaries were, in fact, responsible for Liang's *Good Words* and the Gützlaff Bible falling into the hands of Hong Xiuquan. The final stage, due to the intimate relationship between language and culture, was *localization*. Hong and other leading God Worshippers, recognizing the overlaps between their Christian texts and the indigenous cultural world to which they were accustomed, created a radically original and locally meaningful form of Christianity. This four-stage process, which will probably apply to many other cases from the history of Protestant missions, reveals how an originally foreign religion was gradually absorbed into the linguistic and cultural traditions of a new local world.

Glossary

Aluoben 阿羅本
Bai Shangdi hui 拜上帝會
Ban Zhao 班昭
banfengjian 半封建
banzhimin 半殖民
bao ben 報本
baodi 胞弟
benneng 本能
benxin 本心
benxing 本性
bu Ru yi Fo 補儒易佛
changran zhen ji 常然真寂
Cheng Hao 程顥
Cheng Yi 程頤
chu jiu 除舊
chunwu 蠢物
cizi 次子
cong fan 從番
congyaozhe 從妖者
cun 存
Dafumu 大父母
Dajun 大君
dalu 大路
dao 道
daotong 道統
datong 大同
Daxiong 大兄
Dazhu 大主
Di 帝
di 弟
Di Renjie 狄仁傑
dideng 弟等
di'er zi 第二子
di'erci danu 第二次大怒
dingyou 丁酉
diyici danu 第一次大怒
diyu 地獄
duchang 肚腸
dusheng zi 獨生子
duyi zhen Shen 獨一真神
e 惡
erxiong 二兄
exing 惡性
ezhe 惡者
fa 法
fanu 發怒

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Faqing 法慶
feishen 非神
Feng Yingjing 馮應京
Feng Yunshan 馮雲山
fengjian zhuanzhi zhidu 封建專制制度
Fo 佛
Fofa 佛法
Fu 父
fudao 婦道
fuzhu 夫主
Ganwang 甘王
Ganyao 甘妖
ge 哥
geyi 格義
gonghui 公會
gongxiang taiping 共享太平
guai 怪
guairen 怪人
Guanyin 觀音
gui 鬼
guijian 貴賤
guilu 鬼路
Han Ming 漢明
Hanhui 漢會
he 和
heilongpao 黑龍袍
Hewang 禾王
Hong Liangji 洪亮吉
Hong Rengan 洪仁玕
Hong Xiuquan 洪秀全
Houji 后稷
hua hu 化胡
hua xin 化心
Huandi 桓帝
Huang Wen'an 黃文安
Huang Yizhen 黃以鎮
Huang Zaixing 黃再興
huangdi 皇帝
Huanglao 黃老
huangtian 黃天
hufen 胡氛
hun 魂
hunu 胡奴
huo 火
Huoxiu 火秀
jian 僭
jiang 降
jiang fu 降福
Jiang Yuan 姜嫄
jianjun 監軍
jianzheng 見證
jie 誡
jieji douzheng 階級鬥爭
Jing Dianying 敬奠瀛
jing zhu zui 淨諸罪
jiu liu 九流
jiu Yiselie 救以色列
junzi 君子
Kangxi 康熙
kong 空
kuang 狂
Lai Xinglian 賴興廉
laoshe 老蛇
Laozi 老子
li 禮
Li Gui 李圭
Li Zhizao 李之藻
lian zheng 鍊正
Liang Fa 梁發
lianyu 煉獄
lie 烈
Lin Zhao'en 林兆恩
ling wushen 靈無身
linghun 靈魂
lingmiao 靈妙
Liu Shengpei 劉盛培
Liu Ying 劉英

Ma 馬
man Tian 瞞天
Manyao 滿妖
mie yao 滅妖
Ming Taizu 明太祖
mogui 魔鬼
molian 磨鍊
ni Tian 逆天
ni zhi 逆旨
nianfo 念佛
nüdao 女道
ouxiang 偶像
Pangu 盤古
pingdeng pingjun sixiang 平等平均思想
Pu Songling 蒲松齡
pusa ouxiang 菩薩偶像
qidao zai sancong 妻道在三從
qin 親
Qin Rigang 秦日綱
Qin Shi Huang 秦始皇
qu xie cong zheng 去邪從正
Quanweishi 勸慰師
ren 仁
ren zhi xing 人之性
Renzong 仁宗
ri 日
Rong Sande 容三德
sancong 三從
Sanqing 三清
Sanyi jiao 三一教
Sanyuan 三元
sao 嫂
shang 尚
shang 上
Shangdi 上帝
Shangdi zhi zi 上帝之子
shangzhe 上者
Shangzhu Huang Shangdi 上主皇上帝
Shemo 蛇魔
shen 神
Shen Shiqi 沈世祁
Shen Yehuohua 神爺火華
Shen zhi xing 神之性
Shen zhi zi 神之子
Shenfu 神父
sheng 聖
sheng zhuan cha fan 牲饌茶飯
shengbing 聖兵
Shengfu 聖父
Shengling 聖靈
Shengshen 聖神
Shengshenfeng 聖神風
shenling wu'er 神靈無二
Shentian Shangdi 神天上帝
shenxian 神仙
Shi Dakai 石達開
shi kuan Tiantiao 十款天條
shi tiao shengjie 十條聖誡
Shijiaotan 石角潭
shiwaitaoyuan 世外桃源
shou yao huo 受妖惑
shu bing 贖病
Shubingzhu 贖病主
shun 順
si 私
side 四德
siyao 死妖
Song Huizong 宋徽宗
Song Ruozhao 宋若昭
suchangbei 宿娼輩
tai shengren 太聖人
Taiji 太極
taiping 太平
Taiping Tianguo 太平天國
taiyang 太陽

Taizi 太子
Taizong 太宗
Tian 天
Tian sheng Zhenzhu 天生真主
Tianbing 天兵
Tiandi 天帝
Tianfa 天法
Tianfu 天父
Tianfu Huang Shangdi 天父皇上帝
Tianfu Shangdi 天父上帝
Tianfu Shangzhu Huang Shangdi 天父上主皇上帝
Tianguo 天國
Tianjing 天京
Tianlun 天倫
Tianming 天命
Tianmu 天母
Tiansao 天嫂
Tianshi dao 天師道
Tiantiao 天條
Tianwang 天王
tianxia yijia 天下一家
Tianxin 天心
Tianxiong 天兄
Tianxue 天學
Tianzhu 天主
Tianzi 天子
Tianzun 天尊
tongbao dixiong 同胞弟兄
wai xiongdi 外兄弟
wang 王
wang 亡
Wang Baobang 汪保邦
Wei Changhui 韋昌輝
Wei Enbo 魏恩波
Wen 文
Wu 武
wu 無
wu ma fen 五馬分
wubian 無邊
wulun 五倫
Wusheng Laomu 無生老母
wuwei 無為
wuxing ke jian 無形可見
wuxing wuxiang 無形無像
xia 下
Xia Zhongying 夏鍾英
xialing 遐齡
xiamin zhi bi 下民之辟
Xianfeng 咸豐
xiang 祥
xiangguan 鄉官
xiao 孝
Xiao Chaogui 蕭朝貴
xiao tiantang 小天堂
xiaoshun fumu 孝順父母
xiaozi 孝子
xiazhe 下者
xiegui 邪鬼
xiejiao 邪教
xieshen 邪神
xin guihua 信鬼話
xin Yelusaleng 新也路撒冷
xiong 兄
xiongdi 兄弟
xiru 西儒
Xu 徐
Xu Guangqi 徐光啟
xuncha 巡查
yang 殃
yang 養
Yang Tingyun 楊廷筠
yang xiongdi 洋兄弟
Yang Xiuqing 楊秀清
yangyan 洋煙
Yanluoyao 閻羅妖
Yao 瑤

yaobing 妖兵
yaoguan 妖官
yaohu 妖胡
yaomo 妖魔
yaotu guizu 妖徒鬼卒
Ye 爺
Yehuohua 爺火華
Yesu 耶穌
Yesu jiating 耶穌家庭
yi 義
Yishen 一神
yiyin 異音
yizhe 義者
yonghuo 永火
Yongle 永樂
Yongzheng 雍正
Youzhu 幼主
yuan juanming 願捐命
Yuhuang Dadi 玉皇大帝
Zeng Guofan 曾國藩
zhan xie liu zheng 斬邪留正
Zhang Daoling 張道陵
Zhang Guanglie 張光烈
Zhang Jiao 張角
zhangge 長哥
zhangyou youxu 長幼有序
zhen 朕
zhen 貞
Zhen Yesu jiaohui 真耶穌教會
zhendao 真道
Zheng 政
zheng 正
zheng xintian 正心田
Zheng Yuegong 正月宮
zhengren 正人
Zhenjun 真君
zhenming Tianzi 真命天子
zhenming Zhu 真命主
zhenren 真人
zhenzi 真子
zhi 智
zhong 忠
zhong xiaomei 眾小妹
Zhongguo tese 中國特色
Zhongguohua 中國化
zhongmin 種民
Zhou Xineng 周錫能
Zhu 主
Zhu Tianwang 主天王
Zhu Xi 朱熹
Zhu Xikun 朱錫琨
Zhuang 壯
zhumie 誅滅
zhumie yaomo 誅滅妖魔
zi 子
zimei 姊妹
zongjiao geming 宗教革命
zun shengjie 遵聖誡
zun Tianjie 遵天誡
zunjing zhangshang 尊敬長上

Notes

Chapter 1

1. In his comprehensive history, Jen Yu-wen presents the Taiping Rebellion as an ethnic (anti-Manchu) revolution. According to Jen, the Taipings' brand of "revolutionary nationalism" lived on and "reappeared" in the Xinhai Revolution of 1911. Jen Yu-wen, *The Taiping Revolutionary Movement* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 536. More recently, Bruce Elleman has described the Taipings' ideology as "anti-Manchu Han nationalism." Bruce A. Elleman, *Modern Chinese Warfare, 1795–1989* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 57.
2. Elijah Coleman Bridgman, "A Letter from Rev. E. C. Bridgman" (July 4, 1854), in *WR*, 146–56; p. 149. Originally published in *North China Herald*, July 22, 1854.
3. S. J. Schereschewsky, "Letters from Rev. S. J. Schereschewsky" (March 1861), in *WR*, 295; p. 295. Originally published in *Spirit of Missions*, vol. 5 (July 1861), 211, 213.
4. William Armstrong Russell, "A Letter from Rev. W. H. [*sic*] Russell" (January 15, 1862), in *WR*, 378–82; p. 382. Original document obtained from the Archives of the Church Missionary Society, Letter Book CH/M3, 1859–62, 182–91.
5. Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christian Missions in China* (London: SPCK, 1929), p. 298.
6. Eugene Powers Boardman, *Christian Influence upon the Ideology of the Taiping Rebellion, 1851–1864* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1952), p. 54. See also Jen, *The Taiping Revolutionary Movement*, p. 155.

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C. S. Kilcourse, *Taiping Theology*,
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7. Boardman, *Christian Influence upon the Ideology of the Taiping Rebellion*, pp. 107–8. The idea that the Taipings overlooked the moral "essence" of Christianity (love) can also be found in the works of Jen Yu-wen and John Fairbank. Jen, *The Taiping Revolutionary Movement*, p. 156. John King Fairbank, *The United States and China*, 4th edn (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 184.
8. Boardman, *Christian Influence upon the Ideology of the Taiping Rebellion*, p. 114.
9. Samuel Hugh Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia*, vol. 2: *1500–1900* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2005), p. 293.
10. Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia*, vol. 2, p. 299. Joseph Esherick also refers to Hong's belief system as a "pseudo-Christian millenarian teaching," while Richard Cook characterizes the Taipings as a "violent" and "quasi-Christian" rebel group. Joseph W. Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987), p. 322. Richard R. Cook, "Overcoming Missions Guilt: Robert Morrison, Liang Fa, and the Opium Wars," in Richard R. Cook and David W. Pao (eds), *After Imperialism: Christian Identity in China and The Global Evangelical Movement* (Cambridge: Lutterworth, 2012), 35–45; p. 40.
11. Vincent Y. C. Shih, *The Taiping Ideology: Its Sources, Interpretations, and Influences* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1967), p. xvii.
12. Christopher Munn, "Introduction to the Paperback Edition," in Carl T. Smith, *Chinese Christians: Elites, Middlemen, and the Church in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2005), ix–xxi; p. xii. Hans Küng, "A Christian Response," in Hans Küng and Julia Ching, *Christianity and Chinese Religions* (London: SCM, 1993), 231–72; p. 245. June Grasso, Jay Corrin, and Michael Kort, *Modernization and Revolution in China: From the Opium Wars to the Olympics*, 4th edn (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2009), p. 44.
13. While some of these studies may have been written by non-Christian authors, they nonetheless highlight the continued influence of the interpretive assumptions behind the accounts of missionaries and Christian scholars.
14. Nicolas Standaert, "Christianity in Late Ming and Early Qing China as a Case of Cultural Transmission," in Stephen Uhalley and Xiaoxin Wu (eds), *China and Christianity: Burdened Past, Hopeful Future* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2001), 81–116; p. 99.
15. Exponents of this doctrine of incompatibility include Robert Nelson, William Ashmore (1824–1909), D. Z. Sheffield (d. 1913), and Absalom Sydenstricker (1852–1931). Norman J. Girardot, *The Victorian Translation of China: James Legge's Oriental Pilgrimage* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 228–31, 456, 468, 476–77. For another example of this attitude, see Stuart Creighton Miller, "Ends and Means: Missionary Justification of Force in Nineteenth Century China," in John

K. Fairbank (ed.), *The Missionary Enterprise in China and America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974), 249–82; pp. 270–71. One obvious exception is James Legge (1815–97), who believed that Christianity and Confucianism were essentially compatible. For a discussion of Legge's views on the relation of Christianity to Confucianism, see Girardot, *The Victorian Translation of China*, 192–234.

16. Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, vol. 3: *Three Centuries of Advance, A.D. 1500–A.D. 1800* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1939), p. 336.
17. Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, vol. 3, pp. 336–37.
18. Joseph R. Levenson, "Confucian and Taiping 'Heaven': The Political Implications of Clashing Religious Concepts," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 4, no. 4 (July 1962), 436–53; p. 438.
19. Levenson, "Confucian and Taiping 'Heaven,'" p. 445. Levenson's view of the Taipings as an anti-Confucian movement is often reflected in general surveys of Chinese history. Grasso, Corrin, and Kort, *Modernization and Revolution in China*, p. 45. Jonathan D. Spence, *The Search for Modern China*, 2nd edn (London: W. W. Norton, 1999), pp. 141, 178.
20. Levenson, "Confucian and Taiping 'Heaven,'" pp. 449, 451.
21. Levenson, "Confucian and Taiping 'Heaven,'" pp. 441, 445.
22. Shih, *The Taiping Ideology*, p. 271.
23. Shih, *The Taiping Ideology*, p. 192.
24. Shih, *The Taiping Ideology*, p. 193.
25. Levenson, "Confucian and Taiping 'Heaven,'" pp. 439, 453.
26. Although Shih briefly discusses the place of God in the Taipings' doctrine of filial piety, he neglects the interaction of Christian and Confucian influences in that doctrine and instead emphasizes that the Taipings were "in accord with the ancients." Shih, *The Taiping Ideology*, pp. 35–36, 193.
27. The dichotomization of Christianity and Confucianism can also be seen in previous interpretations of the Taiping Rebellion's failure. According to S. Y. Teng and others, the Taipings' adoption of a Christian (as opposed to traditional Confucian) worldview was responsible for the alienation of the politically significant scholar-official elite in China. S. Y. Teng, *The Taiping Rebellion and the Western Powers: A Comprehensive Survey* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), p. 337. William Lewisohn, "Preface," in J. C. Cheng (ed.), *Chinese Sources for the Taiping Rebellion, 1850–1864* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), vii–x; p. ix.
28. Philip A. Kuhn, "Origins of the Taiping Vision: Cross-Cultural Dimensions of a Chinese Rebellion," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 19, no. 3 (July 1977), 350–66; p. 359.
29. Kuhn, "Origins of the Taiping Vision," pp. 362–64.
30. Kuhn, "Origins of the Taiping Vision," pp. 364, 366. Philip A. Kuhn, "The Taiping Rebellion," in John K. Fairbank (ed.), *The Cambridge*

History of China, vol. 10: *Late Ch'ing, 1800–1911*, part 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 264–317; p. 280.

31. Robert Weller has similarly emphasized the contribution of Guangxi to the politicization of Hong's religious ideas. According to Weller, the transformation of Hong's original ideas through the local religious culture of Guangxi forced him to accept a new interpretation that "redirected the movement from his initial concern with religion alone to political change and the overthrow of the dynasty." Robert P. Weller, *Resistance, Chaos and Control in China: Taiping Rebels, Taiwanese Ghosts and Tiananmen* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), p. 95.
32. Wang Qingcheng, *Taiping Tianguo de lishi he sixiang* (The History and Ideology of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1985), p. 28.
33. Wang, *Taiping Tianguo de lishi he sixiang*, p. 29.
34. Wang, *Taiping Tianguo de lishi he sixiang*, pp. 31–32.
35. For example, see Yuan Shuyi and Lin Yanjiao, "Taiping Tianguo renwu yanjiu shulüe" (A Review of Research on the Characters of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom), in Yuan Shuyi and Lin Yanjiao (eds), *Taiping Tianguo renwu yanjiu* (Research on the Characters of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom) (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 1987), 1–78; p. 4.
36. Hua Gang, *Taiping Tianguo geming zhanzheng shi* (History of the Taiping Revolutionary War) (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1955), p. 17.
37. Hua, *Taiping Tianguo geming zhanzheng shi*, p. 20. Kathryn Bernhardt's analysis of the varied social backgrounds (upper gentry, landlords, militia leaders, peasants, beggars) of Taiping "rural officials" (*xiangguan*) in the Jiangnan challenges the simplistic classification of the Taipings as peasants and reveals the "heterogenous composition" of their local leaders and society. Kathryn Bernhardt, "Elite and Peasant During the Taiping Occupation of the Jiangnan, 1860–1864," *Modern China*, vol. 13, no. 4 (October 1987), 379–410; pp. 384, 390, 392.
38. Fang Zhongying, "Taiping Tianguo geming dui jindai Zhongguo de yingxiang" (The Influence of the Taiping Revolution on Modern China), in Lu Quan (ed.), *Taiping Tianguo yu jindai Zhongguo* (The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom and Modern China) (Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 1992), 94–106; p. 106.
39. Other Chinese-language studies have similarly viewed this slogan as a negation of Christian ethics and proof of Hong's independent revolutionary development. See Yuan and Lin, "Taiping Tianguo renwu yanjiu shulüe," p. 9.
40. Xia Chuntao, *Taiping Tianguo zongjiao* (The Religion of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom) (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe, 1992), pp. 153, 165. In a separate article, Xia argues that the Taipings cannot be classified

as a Christian sect due to their clear departure from (Western/orthodox) Christianity in their ceremonies, festivals, scriptures, and doctrines. Xia Chuntao, "Taiping Tianguo zongjiao 'xiejiao' shuo bian zheng" (A Refutation of the View that the Religion of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom Was a Cult), *Shanxi daxue xuebao (zhexue shehui kexue ban)* (Journal of Shanxi University [Philosophy & Social Science]), vol. 25, no. 2 (April 2002), 101–10; p. 105.

41. Xia, following the earlier interpretation of Wang, explicitly argues that the pressure of the class struggle at Guangxi transformed Hong from an advocate of moral salvation to "a peasant leader proposing anti-Qing revolution." Xia, *Taiping Tianguo zongjiao*, p. 29.
42. Theodore Hamberg, *The Chinese Rebel Chief, Hung-Siu-tsuen; And the Origin of the Insurrection in China* (London: Walton & Maberly, 1855), p. 74.
43. Hong Rengan, "Hong Xiuquan's Background," in *TR*, 3–7; p. 5. Such struggles were anticipated by Hong Liangji (1746–1809), who in 1793 claimed that available farmland and housing could not keep up with China's rapidly expanding population. Hong Liangji, "China's Population Problem," in *SCT* 2, 174–76.
44. Hamberg, *The Chinese Rebel Chief*, p. 75. According to Hamberg, the later Battle of Jintian also originated in a dispute between Hakkas and indigenous people over cattle. Hamberg, *The Chinese Rebel Chief*, pp. 78–79. One of the significant early skirmishes occurred in 1848, after which Shi Dakai (1831–63)—a future Taiping prince—led his (Hakka) clan into the Society of God Worshippers for protection. Jen, *The Taiping Revolutionary Movement*, p. 42.
45. Hong Rengan, "Hong Xiuquan's Background," p. 7.
46. Hamberg, *The Chinese Rebel Chief*, p. 59.
47. Hamberg, *The Chinese Rebel Chief*, pp. 59–62. Jen, *The Taiping Revolutionary Movement*, pp. 38–39, 548.
48. Jen, *The Taiping Revolutionary Movement*, pp. 54–55, 549. Hong Rengan, "Hong Xiuquan's Background," pp. 6–7. According to Hamberg's account, Wang was imprisoned for destroying idols that belonged to other people. Hamberg, *The Chinese Rebel Chief*, pp. 77–78.
49. Jonathan Spence, *God's Chinese Son: The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom of Hong Xiuquan* (London: HarperCollins, 1996), pp. 81, 87–88, 114–15. Jen, *The Taiping Revolutionary Movement*, p. 53. Augustus Lindley also believed that the persecution of the early God Worshippers was a critical factor behind the Taiping Rebellion. Augustus F. Lindley, *Ti-ping Tien-kwoh; The History of the Ti-ping Revolution, Including a Narrative of the Author's Personal Adventures*, vol. 2 (London: Day & Son, 1866), p. 616.
50. Thomas H. Reilly, *The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom: Rebellion and the Blasphemy of Empire* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2004), pp. 11, 15, 99–100. Rudolf Wagner has also discussed the Taipings' belief

that previous emperors had usurped the title Di and were responsible for the Chinese people's historical abandonment of God. Rudolf G. Wagner, *Reenacting the Heavenly Vision: The Role of Religion in the Taiping Rebellion* (Berkeley, CA: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1982), p. 53.

51. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration" (1852), in *TR*, 24–47; p. 46. *Taiping zhaoshu* (Taiping Imperial Declaration; 1852), p. 18. National Library of Australia (website). Available at http://nla.gov.au/nla.gen-vn511334 (accessed October 21, 2010). The *Taiping Imperial Declaration* is a collection of four texts that were originally written by Hong between 1844 and 1847.
52. This argument should not be confused with the misleading claim that the ideas in Hong's early texts (1844–47) constituted a "comparatively complete anti-Qing revolutionary ideology." Chen Zhoutang, "Hong Xiuquan fan Qing sixiang chansheng yu heshi" (When Did Hong Xiuquan's Anti-Qing Ideology Emerge?), in Xia Wuyan and Deng Rubang (eds), *Hong Xiuquan sixiang yanjiu lunwen ji* (A Collection of Research Essays on the Ideology of Hong Xiuquan) (Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 1985), 28–35; p. 34.
53. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "The Missionary Enterprise and Theories of Imperialism," in Fairbank (ed.), *The Missionary Enterprise in China and America*, 336–73; p. 363.
54. Schlesinger, "The Missionary Enterprise and Theories of Imperialism," p. 360.
55. Schlesinger, "The Missionary Enterprise and Theories of Imperialism," pp. 363–65.
56. Cultural rape: Susantha Goonatilake, "Cultural Imperialism: A Short History, Future, and a Postscript from the Present," in Bernd Hamm and Russell Smandych (eds), *Cultural Imperialism: Essays on the Political Economy of Cultural Domination* (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview, 2005), 33–51; p. 46. Cultural genocide: George Tinker, "Spirituality, Native American Personhood, Sovereignty, and Solidarity," in James Treat (ed.), *Native and Christian: Indigenous Voices on Religious Identity in the United States and Canada* (New York: Routledge, 1996), 115–31; p. 118.
57. George E. Tinker, *Missionary Conquest: The Gospel and Native American Cultural Genocide* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1993), p. 6.
58. For discussion of Christian missions and cultural homogenization, see Robert Eric Frykenberg, "Gospel, Globalization, and Hindutva: The Politics of 'Conversion' in India," in Donald M. Lewis (ed.), *Christianity Reborn: The Global Expansion of Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2004), 108–32; p. 129. Steve Brouwer, Paul Gifford, and Susan D. Rose, *Exporting the American Gospel: Global Christian Fundamentalism* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 271.

59. Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, vol. 1: *Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1991), pp. 310–11.
60. Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, vol. 1, p. 213. John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1992), p. 245.
61. Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, vol. 1, p. 200. Clifton Crais has similarly described the Christian mission as the "colonialist institution *par excellence*." Clifton C. Crais, *White Supremacy and Black Resistance in Pre-Industrial South Africa: The Making of the Colonial Order in the Eastern Cape, 1770–1865* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 104.
62. Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, vol. 1, p. 218. Comaroff and Comaroff, *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination*, p. 252.
63. R. S. Sugirtharajah, *The Bible and the Third World: Precolonial, Colonial and Postcolonial Encounters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 57.
64. Sugirtharajah, *The Bible and the Third World*, pp. 57, 59, 64–65.
65. Andrew Porter, "'Cultural Imperialism' and Protestant Missionary Enterprise, 1780–1914," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 25, no. 3 (September 1997), 367–91; p. 373. Ryan Dunch has argued that the cultural imperialism paradigm is "intertwined with essentializing discourses of an imagined national or cultural authenticity." Ryan Dunch, "Beyond Cultural Imperialism: Cultural Theory, Christian Missions, and Global Modernity," *History and Theory*, vol. 41, no. 3 (October 2002), 301–25; p. 318.
66. Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1989), p. 3.
67. Andrew F. Walls, "Christianity in the Non-Western World: A Study in the Serial Nature of Christian Expansion," in Andrew F. Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002), 27–48; p. 42.
68. Dunch, "Beyond Cultural Imperialism," p. 324. Focusing on the concept of vernacularization, Dana Robert argues that "the fundamental priority for missionaries was to produce a Bible in common languages so that people could understand it for themselves." Dana L. Robert, *Christian Mission: How Christianity Became a World Religion* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), p. 43. Brian Stanley has similarly claimed that "uncontrollable" vernacular texts enhanced not the missionaries' control and authority, but the local people's sense of ownership over Christianity. Brian Stanley, "Twentieth-Century World Christianity: A Perspective from the History of Missions," in Lewis (ed.), *Christianity Reborn*, 52–83; p. 64.

69. This contribution relates to a wider effort among historians to emphasize the vital role of local converts in the evangelization and localization processes. Norman Etherington, "Introduction," in Norman Etherington (ed.), *Missions and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1–18; p. 7. R. G. Tiedemann, "Indigenous Agency, Religious Protectorates, and Chinese Interests: The Expansion of Christianity in Nineteenth-Century China," in Dana L. Robert (ed.), *Converting Colonialism: Visions and Realities in Mission History, 1706–1914* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2008), 206–41. Edward E. Andrews, "Christian Missions and Colonial Empires Reconsidered: A Black Evangelist in West Africa, 1766–1816," *Journal of Church and State*, vol. 51, no. 4 (Autumn 2009), 663–91. Andrew Porter, *Religion versus Empire? British Protestant Missionaries and Overseas Expansion, 1700–1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), p. 321. Andrew Porter, "Missions and Empire, c. 1873–1914," in Sheridan Gilley and Brian Stanley (eds), *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 8: *World Christianities, c. 1815–c. 1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 560–75; p. 571.
70. The term vernacularization has also been used to describe this process of adapting something foreign to the conditions of a new region. See Maiken Umbach and Bernd Hüppauf, *Vernacular Modernism: Heimat, Globalization, and the Built Environment* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), p. 9. However, this study will use the term vernacularization in its more specific sense of translating foreign texts into new local languages.
71. Roland Robertson, "Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity," in Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash, and Roland Robertson (eds), *Global Modernities* (London: SAGE, 1995), 25–44; p. 28.
72. Brian S. Turner, "The McDonald's Mosaic: Glocalization and Diversity," in George Ritzer and Zeynep Atalay (eds), *Readings in Globalization: Key Concepts and Major Debates* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 393–96; p. 393.
73. James L. Watson, "Introduction: Transnationalism, Localization, and Fast Foods in East Asia," in James L. Watson (ed.), *Golden Arches East: McDonald's in East Asia*, 2nd edn (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), 1–38; p. 23.
74. Beverley Hooper, "Globalisation and Resistance in Post-Mao China: The Case of Foreign Consumer Products," *Asian Studies Review*, vol. 24, no. 4 (December 2000), 439–70; pp. 453, 457, 460.
75. Paul Hopper, *Understanding Cultural Globalization* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), p. 97.
76. Ogbu U. Kalu, "Changing Tides: Some Currents in World Christianity at the Opening of the Twenty-First Century," in Ogbu U. Kalu and Alaine Low (eds), *Interpreting Contemporary Christianity: Global Processes and Local Identities* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2008), 3–23; p. 10.

77. The phrase "glocal particularizations" is taken from the work of Peter Beyer. Peter Beyer, "Globalization and Glocalization," in James A. Beckford and N. J. Demerath III (eds), *The SAGE Handbook of the Sociology of Religion* (London: SAGE, 2007), 98–117; p. 106.
78. Beyer, "Globalization and Glocalization," p. 98.
79. A number of recent studies have emphasized the growth of local Christianities as one of the outcomes of global Protestant missions. Diarmaid MacCulloch, for example, claims that the mid-nineteenth century saw the growth of "ideological fusions" as Western forms of Christianity interacted with traditional cultures around the world. He also argues that Christianity "radically diversified" in Africa, Latin America, and Asia during the twentieth century. Diarmaid MacCulloch, *A History of Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years* (London: Penguin, 2010), pp. 896–97, 965–66.
80. For the official Chinese discourse of "socialism with Chinese characteristics," see Arif Dirlik, "Postsocialism? Reflections on 'Socialism with Chinese Characteristics,'" in Arif Dirlik, *Marxism in the Chinese Revolution* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 229–50. The Chinese government has also applied the language of Chinese characteristics to the issue of military reform, while Chinese scholars have drawn on the concept to construct new theories of international relations. Dennis J. Blasko, *The Chinese Army Today: Tradition and Transformation for the 21st Century* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 13. Zhang Feng, "Debating the 'Chinese Theory of International Relations': Toward a New Stage in China's International Studies," in Fred Dallmayr and Zhao Tingyang (eds), *Contemporary Chinese Political Thought: Debates and Perspectives* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2012), 67–87.
81. For a critique of the essentialist theory of sinicization (point 1) in Chinese history, see Pamela Kyle Crossley, "Thinking about Ethnicity in Early Modern China," *Late Imperial China*, vol. 11, no. 1 (June 1990), 1–35.
82. This study also employs the term glocalization because it is more inclusive than existing theological terms such as inculturation, which assumes that there is a normative way of interpreting the gospel and only tolerates adaptation within the clearly defined bounds of orthodoxy. Similarly, this study rejects the label "heterodox Christianity" as a theologically exclusive category that perpetuates the idea of an authentic, essential Christianity.
83. The publication lists of the Taipings suggest that they printed the revised version after September 1860. "Introductory Note to Documents 40 and 41, Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the Old and New Testaments," in *TR*, 220–24; p. 223.
84. The two other books from the Five Classics (*Book of Changes* and *Spring and Autumn Annals*) were also part of that orthodox canon, but they will not feature in the analysis of this study.

Chapter 2

1. James Legge, *The Nestorian Monument of Hsi-an Fu in Shen-hsi, China, Relating to the Diffusion of Christianity in China in the Seventh and Eighth Centuries* (London: Trübner & Co., 1888 [reprinted New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1966]), pp. 8–15, 42–43. Daniel H. Bays, *A New History of Christianity in China* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), pp. 7–9.
2. Pénélope Riboud, "Tang," in Nicolas Standaert (ed.), *Handbook of Christianity in China*, vol. 1: *635–1800* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 1–42; p. 36.
3. The *Book of Jesus-Messiah* may have been written by Aluoben himself. Bays, *A New History of Christianity in China*, p. 10. Riboud, "Tang," pp. 4–5.
4. Riboud, "Tang," pp. 5, 36.
5. Adopting a method of translation called the "matching of meanings" (*geyi*), early Buddhist monks in China frequently used Daoist expressions (as opposed to using phonetic transliteration) to translate technical Buddhist terms. *Dharma* and *bodhi*, for example, were translated as the "Way" (*dao*), *nirvāna* as "inaction" (*wuwei*), and *arhat* as the Daoist "spiritual master" (*zhenren*; literally, "true person"). Paul Demiéville, "Philosophy and Religion from Han to Sui," in Denis Twitchett and Michael Loewe (eds), *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 1: *The Ch'in and Han Empires, 221 B.C.–A.D. 220* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 808–72; p. 825. Arthur F. Wright, *Buddhism in Chinese History* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1959), p. 36. According to Julia Ching, the adoption of Daoist ideas and terminology was essential for the "survival and advancement" of Buddhism in China. Julia Ching, *Chinese Religions* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), p. 125.
6. Riboud, "Tang," p. 36.
7. This epithet was used in the Nestorian stele of 781. Legge, *The Nestorian Monument of Hsi-an Fu*, pp. 2–3, 47. Riboud, "Tang," pp. 36–37.
8. Riboud, "Tang," p. 37. The later *Discourse on Monotheism* (*Yishen lun*) adopted the more neutral title One God (Yishen).
9. Riboud, "Tang," p. 37. The Nestorian stele explains that a picture of the emperor was painted on the walls of the monastery at Chang'an. Legge, *The Nestorian Monument of Hsi-an Fu*, pp. 13, 43.
10. Riboud, "Tang," p. 2. Franciscans also took Catholicism to China during the thirteenth century.
11. Steven Ozment, *The Age of Reform, 1250–1550: An Intellectual and Religious History of Late Medieval and Reformation Europe* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980), p. 413.
12. R. Po-Chia Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal, 1540–1770*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 31.
13. Liam Matthew Brockey, *Journey to the East: The Jesuit Mission to China, 1579–1724* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), pp. 31–33.

14. Brockey, *Journey to the East*, pp. 36–37, 49.
15. This objective may have stemmed from Ricci's experience of local hostility in Guangdong. Locals threw stones at the missionaries' house on several occasions during the 1580s and random acts of violence and vandalism even continued into the 1590s. Brockey, *Journey to the East*, pp. 35, 37.
16. J. S. A. Elisonas, "The Evangelic Furnace: Japan's First Encounter with the West," in Wm. Theodore de Bary, Carol Gluck, and Arthur E. Tiedemann (eds), *Sources of Japanese Tradition*, vol. 2: *1600 to 2000*, 2nd edn (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 143–51; p. 148.
17. George Elison, *Deus Destroyed: The Image of Christianity in Early Modern Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), pp. 58–60, 62. J. F. Moran, *The Japanese and the Jesuits: Alessandro Valignano in Sixteenth-Century Japan* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 54, 56.
18. Stefan Kaiser, "Translations of Christian Terminology into Japanese, 16–19th Centuries: Problems and Solutions," in John Breen and Mark Williams (eds), *Japan and Christianity: Impacts and Responses* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), 8–29; p. 10. Ikuo Higashibaba, *Christianity in Early Modern Japan: Kirishitan Belief and Practice* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), p. 9.
19. Brockey, *Journey to the East*, p. 43.
20. Willard Peterson, "Learning from Heaven: The Introduction of Christianity and Other Western Ideas into Late Ming China," in Denis Twitchett and Frederick W. Mote (eds), *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 8: *The Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644*, part 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 789–839; p. 808. John D. Young, *Confucianism and Christianity: The First Encounter* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1983), p. 26.
21. George H. Dunne, *Generation of Giants: The Story of the Jesuits in China in the Last Decades of the Ming Dynasty* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1962), p. 32. Ricci completed *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* with the assistance of Feng Yingjing (1555–1606; proof-reader) and Li Zhizao (1565–1630; preface writer). Sangkeun Kim, *Strange Names of God: The Missionary Translation of the Divine Name and the Chinese Responses to Matteo Ricci's Shangti in Late Ming China, 1583–1644* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), p. 157.
22. Matteo Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, trans. Douglas Lancashire and Peter Hu Kuo-chen, ed. Edward J. Malatesta (St. Louis, MO: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1985), pp. 99, 107.
23. Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, p. 123 (original translation revised).
24. This fusion of the Christian and classical deities is noticeably similar to the barbarian conversion theory from the early history of Buddhism in China. That discourse, which originated in the second century, taught that Buddhism was the doctrine preached by Laozi as he departed westward to

"convert the barbarians" (*hua hu*). The Buddha was also worshipped alongside Huanglao (the deification of Laozi) at the courts of Liu Ying (d. 71) and the emperor Huandi (r. 147–67). Erik Zürcher, *The Buddhist Conquest of China: The Spread and Adaptation of Buddhism in Early Medieval China*, 3rd edn (Leiden: Brill, 2007), p. 37. Hubert Seiwert, *Popular Religious Movements and Heterodox Sects in Chinese History* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp. 34, 95, 103.

25. D. E. Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500–1800*, 3rd edn (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), p. 23. Gianni Criveller, *Preaching Christ in Late Ming China: The Jesuits' Presentation of Christ from Matteo Ricci to Giulio Aleni* (Taipei: Taipei Ricci Institute, 1997), p. 353.
26. Matteo Ricci, *China in the Sixteenth Century: The Journals of Matthew Ricci, 1583–1610*, trans. Louis J. Gallagher (New York: Random House, 1953), p. 96.
27. Ricci, *China in the Sixteenth Century*, p. 97.
28. Kim, *Strange Names of God*, p. 172. Dauril Alden, *The Making of an Enterprise: The Society of Jesus in Portugal, Its Empire, and Beyond, 1540–1750* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), p. 574.
29. "Prohibition of Chinese Rites by Clement XI (1704)," in Klaus Koschorke, Frieder Ludwig, and Mariano Delgado (eds), *A History of Christianity in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, 1450–1990: A Documentary Sourcebook* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2007), 39–41; p. 40.
30. For a discussion of this particular episode, see Benjamin A. Elman, *On Their Own Terms: Science in China, 1550–1900* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), pp. 163–64.
31. R. G. Tiedemann, "Christianity in East Asia," in Stewart J. Brown and Timothy Tackett (eds), *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol. 7: *Enlightenment, Reawakening and Revolution, 1660–1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 451–74; p. 463.
32. Eugenio Menegon, *Ancestors, Virgins, and Friars: Christianity as a Local Religion in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009), p. 28.
33. Lars Peter Laamann, "Memories of Faith: The 'Christian Sutras' of Eighteenth-Century China," in R. N. Swanson (ed.), *The Church and the Book: Papers Read at the 2000 Summer Meeting and the 2001 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2004), 279–302; p. 300. For discussion of active lay communities in China, see Robert E. Entenmann, "Christian Virgins in Eighteenth-Century Sichuan," in Daniel H. Bays (ed.), *Christianity in China: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 180–93. Tiedemann, "Indigenous Agency, Religious Protectorates, and Chinese Interests."

34. Menegon, *Ancestors, Virgins, and Friars*, pp. 18, 23.
35. Hsia, *The World of Catholic Renewal*, p. 28.
36. Menegon, *Ancestors, Virgins, and Friars*, p. 64.
37. Menegon, *Ancestors, Virgins, and Friars*, p. 68.
38. Menegon, *Ancestors, Virgins, and Friars*, pp. 69, 221–22.
39. Menegon, *Ancestors, Virgins, and Friars*, pp. 211, 226–27.
40. Menegon, *Ancestors, Virgins, and Friars*, p. 225.
41. Similar cases of local converts initiating exorcistic rituals appear in stories from the Jesuit communities of late Ming Fujian. Erik Zürcher, "The Jesuit Mission in Fujian in Late Ming Times: Levels of Response," in E. B. Vermeer (ed.), *Development and Decline of Fukien Province in the 17th and 18th Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 417–57; pp. 445–46.
42. Menegon, *Ancestors, Virgins, and Friars*, pp. 73, 244. According to the Pure Land school, an individual who had faith in the Buddha Amitābha and recited his name with devotion was assured of their rebirth and ultimate enlightenment in the Pure Land. B. J. ter Haar, *The White Lotus Teachings in Chinese Religious History* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999), pp. 17–18. Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 252–53.
43. Menegon, *Ancestors, Virgins, and Friars*, p. 242.
44. Menegon, *Ancestors, Virgins, and Friars*, p. 297. Besides responding to people's calls for assistance in moments of danger and distress, Guanyin, according to the sutras of Pure Land Buddhism, was able to confer a son "endowed with good fortune and wisdom" or a daughter "of great personal beauty" on any childless woman who sought her help. Masatoshi Ueki and Makiko Ueki (trans.), "Guanyin Chapter of the Lotus Sutra," in Robin R. Wang (ed.), *Images of Women in Chinese Thought and Culture: Writings from the Pre-Qin Period through the Song Dynasty* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2003), 284–90; p. 288.
45. Menegon, *Ancestors, Virgins, and Friars*, pp. 112, 279, 298. The Catholic Church has recently confirmed that Christians can assist souls in purgatory through prayers, the Eucharistic sacrifice, almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance. "Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church" (2005), section 211. The Holy See (website). Available at http://www.vatican.va/archive/compendium_ccc/documents/archive_2005_compendium-ccc_en.html (accessed August 8, 2010).
46. Ricci himself claimed that "a certain amount of liberty" was required at the beginning of a mission "where the result of the labor expended was dependent upon conciliating those, in whose power it rested to sanction a dubious undertaking." Ricci, *China in the Sixteenth Century*, p. 393.
47. Kurt Braunmüller and Juliane House, "Introduction," in Kurt Braunmüller and Juliane House (eds), *Convergence and Divergence in Language Contact Situations* (Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins, 2009), 1–9; p. 3. James

J. Bradac and Howard Giles, "Language and Social Psychology: Conceptual Niceties, Complexities, Curiosities, Monstrosities, and How It All Works," in Kristine L. Fitch and Robert E. Sanders (eds), *Handbook of Language and Social Interaction* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2005), 201–30; pp. 215–16. For further discussion of this topic, see Peter Auer, Frans Hinskens, and Paul Kerswill (eds), *Dialect Change: Convergence and Divergence in European Languages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

48. Erik Zürcher, "Confucian and Christian Religiosity in Late Ming China," *The Catholic Historical Review*, vol. 83, no. 4 (October 1997), 614–53; p. 620. Erik Zürcher, "A Complement to Confucianism: Christianity and Orthodoxy in Late Imperial China," in Chun-chieh Huang and Erik Zürcher (eds), *Norms and the State in China* (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 71–92; p. 76.
49. Frank Lambert, *Inventing the "Great Awakening"* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. 27.
50. Lambert, *Inventing the "Great Awakening,"* p. 27.
51. Michael Gauvreau, "Protestantism Transformed: Personal Piety and the Evangelical Social Vision, 1815–1867," in George A. Rawlyk (ed.), *The Canadian Protestant Experience, 1760–1990* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 48–97; pp. 59–60. David Bebbington has argued that conversionism, activism, biblicism, and crucicentrism (a particular emphasis on the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross) are the defining marks of evangelical religion. D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), pp. 2–3.
52. Paul A. Cohen, "Christian Missions and Their Impact to 1900," in Fairbank (ed.), *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 10, part 1, 543–90; p. 547.
53. Christopher Hancock, *Robert Morrison and the Birth of Chinese Protestantism* (London: T&T Clark, 2008), p. 11.
54. Bays, *A New History of Christianity in China*, p. 44.
55. For discussion of this Protestant principle, see chapter 8 of Alister E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), 145–68. See also Euan Cameron, *The European Reformation* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), pp. 136–39.
56. In 1808, Morrison described the acquisition of the Chinese language, because of its importance to the translation of the scriptures, as his "highest duty." Eliza A. Morrison (ed.), *Memoirs of the Life and Labours of Robert Morrison*, vol. 1 (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1839), p. 200.
57. Morrison (ed.), *Memoirs*, vol. 1, pp. 77–78. Thor Strandenaes, "Anonymous Bible Translators: Native Literati and the Translation of the Bible into Chinese, 1807–1907," in Stephen Batalden, Kathleen Cann, and John Dean (eds), *Sowing the Word: The Cultural Impact of the British and Foreign Bible Society, 1804–2004* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2004),

121–48; pp. 126–27. Tan Shulin, *Malixun yu Zhong Xi wenhua jiaoliu* (Robert Morrison and Chinese-Western Cultural Exchange) (Hangzhou: Zhongguo meishu xueyuan chubanshe, 2004), p. 42.

58. Strandenaes, "Anonymous Bible Translators," pp. 128, 130. Morrison (ed.), *Memoirs*, vol. 1, pp. 238, 274.
59. Milne, according to one of Morrison's letters, was responsible for the translation of Job and "the Historical Books of the Old Testament." Eliza A. Morrison (ed.), *Memoirs of the Life and Labours of Robert Morrison*, vol. 2 (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1839), pp. 2–3.
60. Lauren Pfister, "Bible Translations and the Protestant 'Term Question,'" in R. G. Tiedemann (ed.), *Handbook of Christianity in China*, vol. 2: *1800 to the Present* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 361–70; pp. 361–62.
61. Morrison (ed.), *Memoirs*, vol. 1, pp. 200–1.
62. W. H. Medhurst, *China: Its State and Prospects, with Especial Reference to the Spread of the Gospel* (London: John Snow, 1838), p. 548.
63. Alexander Wylie, *Memorials of Protestant Missionaries to the Chinese: Giving a List of Their Publications, and Obituary Notices of the Deceased* (Shanghai: American Presbyterian Mission Press, 1867), pp. 31, 62. Jessie Gregory Lutz, *Opening China: Karl F. A. Gützlaff and Sino-Western Relations, 1827–1852* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2008), p. 159. Reilly, *The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom*, p. 74.
64. Liang Fa, *Quanshi liangyan* (Good Words to Admonish the Age; 1832) (Taibei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1965), part 6, pp. 301–2, 309. Robert Philip, *The Life and Opinions of the Rev. William Milne, D.D., Missionary to China* (London: John Snow, 1840), pp. 224–25, 231. Hamberg, *The Chinese Rebel Chief*, pp. 26–27. P. Richard Bohr, "Liang Fa's Quest for Moral Power," in Suzanne Wilson Barnett and John King Fairbank (eds), *Christianity in China: Early Protestant Missionary Writings* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 35–46; pp. 36, 40. Jessie G. Lutz, "Early Chinese Protestants," in Tiedemann (ed.), *Handbook of Christianity in China*, vol. 2, 247–60; p. 249.
65. Hamberg explained that Liang's *Good Words* was "revised by Dr. Morrison in manuscript, and afterwards printed at Malacca." Hamberg, *The Chinese Rebel Chief*, p. 27. Liang also confirmed that Morrison acted as editor for one of his religious texts. Liang, *Quanshi liangyan*, part 6, p. 304. We can thus presume that the content of Liang's book was consistent with the theological worldview of his Protestant instructors.
66. Jessie G. Lutz and R. Ray Lutz, "Karl Gützlaff's Approach to Indigenization: The Chinese Union," in Bays (ed.), *Christianity in China*, 269–91; p. 269.
67. Lutz and Lutz, "Karl Gützlaff's Approach to Indigenization," pp. 270–71. Lutz, *Opening China*, p. 282.
68. Lutz and Lutz, "Karl Gützlaff's Approach to Indigenization," pp. 272–73.

69. Jonathan Spence and P. Richard Bohr have both identified Edwin Stevens as the missionary who handed Liang's book to Hong. Spence, *God's Chinese Son*, pp. 11, 30–31. P. Richard Bohr, "Taiping Religion and Its Legacy," in Tiedemann (ed.), *Handbook of Christianity in China*, vol. 2, 371–95; p. 373.
70. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle" (1862 [written 1848]), in *TR*, 51–76; pp. 63–65. *Taiping tianri* (Taiping Heavenly Chronicle; 1862 [written 1848]), pp. 18–21. Cambridge University Library, Wade Collection. FC.171.7(5). F 63.
71. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," p. 70. *Taiping tianri*, p. 27. Issachar Jacox Roberts, "A Letter from the American Baptist Missionary Rev. I. J. Roberts" (October 6, 1852), in *WR*, 19–22; p. 19. Originally published in *The Chinese and General Missionary Gleaner*, vol. 2, no. 9 (February 1853), 67–69. Issachar Jacox Roberts, "A Letter from Rev. I. J. Roberts [a]" (February 24, 1861), in *WR*, 262–64; p. 264. Originally published in *North China Herald*, March 30, 1861. Bridgman, "A Letter from Rev. E. C. Bridgman," p. 153.
72. Lutz, *Opening China*, p. 161. Reilly, *The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom*, p. 92. This inference is supported by Theodore Hamberg's claim that Hong, while at home with intimate friends in 1848, "occasionally read some portion of the Old or New Testament, which he had received during his stay at Canton." Hamberg, *The Chinese Rebel Chief*, p. 68. Augustus Lindley also reported that Hong, following his arrival at Thistle Mountain in 1847, introduced "copies of the Bible he had brought from Canton." Augustus F. Lindley, *Ti-ping Tien-kwoh; The History of the Ti-ping Revolution, Including a Narrative of the Author's Personal Adventures* (London: Day & Son, 1866), p. 46.
73. For a brief discussion of Bible printing under the Taipings, see "Introductory Note to Documents 40 and 41, Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the Old and New Testaments," pp. 222–24.

Chapter 3

1. P. M. Yap, for example, has interpreted Hong's religious visions as evidence of mental illness. According to Yap, the recorded visions show that Hong was "suffering from delusional ideas of psychotic intensity." P. M. Yap, "The Mental Illness of Hung Hsiu-Ch'uan, Leader of the Taiping Rebellion," *The Far Eastern Quarterly*, vol. 13, no. 3 (May 1954), 287–304; p. 296. Jen Yu-wen has echoed Yap's psychological interpretation, claiming that Hong was "the victim of an acute mental illness of psychotic nature." Jen, *The Taiping Revolutionary Movement*, p. 17.
2. Hong Rengan, "Hong Xiuquan's Background," p. 3. Hamberg, *The Chinese Rebel Chief*, p. 11.

3. The dates of Hong's second (1836) and third (1837) failures are confirmed by Hamberg's account. Hamberg, *The Chinese Rebel Chief*, pp. 14–15.
4. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," pp. 63–65. *Taiping tianri*, pp. 18–21.
5. Hamberg, *The Chinese Rebel Chief*, pp. 40–45.
6. For a brief account of Hong's trip to Guangzhou, see Hamberg, *The Chinese Rebel Chief*, pp. 47–49.
7. Hamberg, *The Chinese Rebel Chief*, p. 53.
8. Jen, *The Taiping Revolutionary Movement*, pp. 64–65.
9. For a detailed chronology of the rebellion, see Jen, *The Taiping Revolutionary Movement*, pp. 547–64.
10. Benjamin A. Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), pp. 662–65.
11. Susan Mann Jones and Philip A. Kuhn, "Dynastic Decline and the Roots of Rebellion," in Fairbank (ed.), *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. 10, part 1, 107–62; pp. 108–12. William Rowe has described this imbalance between the number of intellectuals and government posts in late Qing China as a "talent glut." William T. Rowe, *China's Last Empire: The Great Qing* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009), p. 151.
12. The failed scholar Pu Songling (1640–1715) explained that this kind of response was typical for unsuccessful examination candidates. Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China*, p. 361.
13. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 31 (original translation revised). *Taiping zhaoshu*, p. 6. The dating of this text (1845) is based on the record of the *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle*. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," p. 70. *Taiping tianri*, p. 27.
14. Hong Rengan also suggested that Hong's ascension was a spiritual phenomenon in claiming that his "soul saw the Heavenly Father." *Kaichao Jingzhong junshi Ganwang Hong bao zhi* (Precious Regulations of the Shield King Hong Rengan), p. 13. New York Public Library (website). Available at http://digitalgallery.nypl.org/nypldigital/id?1707321 (accessed November 20, 2013). Robert Weller has argued that this representation of Hong's ascension would have made his visions easier to accept at Xunzhou (Guangxi), since the region had a pre-existing tradition of spirit journeys that would have encouraged local people to see his revelation as "quite plausibly a real spirit trip to Heaven." Weller, *Resistance, Chaos and Control in China*, p. 72.
15. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," p. 53. *Taiping tianri*, p. 3.
16. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," pp. 57–58 (original translation revised). *Taiping tianri*, p. 10.
17. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," p. 62 (original translation revised). *Taiping tianri*, p. 16.

18. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," p. 59 (original translation revised). *Taiping tianri*, pp. 12–13.
19. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," p. 57 (original translation revised). *Taiping tianri*, p. 9.
20. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," p. 62 (original translation revised). *Taiping tianri*, p. 17.
21. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," p. 63 (original translation revised). *Taiping tianri*, p. 17.
22. "The Trimetrical Classic" (1853), in *TR*, 151–61; p. 156 (original translation revised). *Sanzi jing* (Three Character Classic [Taiping version]; 1853), p. 8. National Library of Australia (website). Available at http://nla.gov.au/nla.gen-vn2032095 (accessed October 21, 2010).
23. Wang Qingcheng has claimed that the Taipings saw Pangu as a synonym for the biblical Adam. Wang, *Taiping Tianguo de lishi he sixiang*, pp. 301–2. However, the broader symbolic interpretation (Pangu as a symbol of the earliest generation in Chinese history) is supported by the edited version of the *Taiping Imperial Declaration*, which changed the passage "from the time of Pangu down to the Three Dynasties" to "China's early generation and period of high antiquity." "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 43 (original translation revised). *Taiping zhaoshu*, p. 16. *Taiping zhaoshu* (Taiping Imperial Declaration; 1852), 2nd edn, p. 11. National Library of Australia (website). Available at http://nla.gov.au/nla.gen-vn2033662 (accessed October 21, 2010).
24. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 25 (original translation revised). *Taiping zhaoshu*, p. 1.
25. The Taipings referred to earlier kings as *kuang* (literally, "mad" or "wild"), rather than *wang*. The use of this term was not an implicit criticism of their characters or rule, but simply emphasized the uniqueness of Hong and the Taiping princes and their exclusive right to use the title of king (*wang*).
26. "The Book of Heavenly Commandments" (1852), in *TR*, 111–24; pp. 113–14 (original translations revised). *Tiantiao shu* (Book of Heavenly Commandments; 1852), pp. 1–2. National Library of Australia (website). Available at http://nla.gov.au/nla.gen-vn2032067 (accessed October 21, 2010).
27. "The Trimetrical Classic," p. 157 (original translation revised). *Sanzi jing*, p. 9.
28. The dating of this text (1845–47) is based on the reckoning of Theodore Hamberg, who obtained his information from Hong Rengan. Hamberg, *The Chinese Rebel Chief*, p. 45.
29. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," pp. 43–44 (original translation revised). *Taiping zhaoshu*, p. 16.
30. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 44 (original translation revised). *Taiping zhaoshu*, p. 16. See also "The Trimetrical Classic," p. 157. *Sanzi jing*, p. 10.

31. "The Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature" (1854), in *TR*, 364–408; p. 371 (original translation revised). *Tianqing daoli shu* (Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature; 1854), p. 6. New York Public Library (website). Available at http://digitalgallery.nypl.org/nypldigital/id?1707517 (accessed October 22, 2010).
32. In his preface to the *Mean by Chapter and Phrase*, Zhu Xi argued that the original Way (associated with the Duke of Zhou, Confucius, and other ancients) was lost after Mencius, leading to one thousand years of ignorance until the Cheng brothers (Cheng Hao [1032–85] and Cheng Yi [1033–1107]) rediscovered the orthodox tradition and exposed the falsehood of Buddhism and Daoism. Cheng Yi, in a memorial to Emperor Renzong (1050 [r. 1022–63]), had previously claimed that the Way flourished during the Three Dynasties, but declined after the Qin and Han. Zhu Xi, "Preface to the *Mean by Chapter and Phrase*," in *SCT* 1, 731–34; pp. 733–34. Cheng Yi, "Memorial to Emperor Renzong," in *SCT* 1, 598–600; p. 599.
33. Yang outlined his view of Chinese religious history in the *Treatise to Supplant Doubts* (*Daiyi pian*; 1621), the *Sequel to the Treatise to Supplant Doubts* (*Daiyi xupian*; 1635), and his preface to Giulio Aleni's (1582–1649) *General Account of Western Studies* (*Xixuefan*; 1623). N. Standaert, *Yang Tingyun, Confucian and Christian in Late Ming China: His Life and Thought* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), pp. 127–31.
34. Gützlaff and other Protestant missionaries also used the title Shangdi in their religious tracts. See Karl Gützlaff, *Yesu shenji zhi zhuan* (The Miracles of Jesus; 1836). National Library of Australia (website). Available at http://nla.gov.au/nla.gen-vn2015899 (accessed October 23, 2010).
35. The extended title Shangzhu Huang Shangdi ("Supreme Lord and Great Shangdi") was also taken from the Chinese Bible. *Jiu yizhao shengshu* (The Old Testament [Genesis, Exodus, Numbers]; 1853), Exodus, p. 31. National Library of Australia (website). Available at http://nla.gov.au/nla.gen-vn2033774 (accessed October 23, 2010).
36. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 43 (original translation revised). *Taiping zhaoshu*, p. 16.
37. "The Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature," p. 370. *Tianqing daoli shu*, p. 5.
38. "Important Observations Regarding Heavenly Principles" (1854), in *TR*, 344–64; p. 351 (original translation revised). Walter Henry Medhurst, *Tianli yaolun* (Important Discourses on Heavenly Principles), pp. 7–8. National Library of Australia (website). Available at http://nla.gov.au/nla.gen-vn2023608 (accessed October 23, 2010). The first of these three classical extracts ("Shangdi is great") was actually taken from the *Book of Poetry*, and not the *Book of History* as Medhurst suggested. "The She King," in James Legge (trans.), *The Chinese Classics*, vol. 4: *The She King, or the Book of Poetry*, part 2 (London: Trübner & Co., 1871), 245–647

[hereafter *Book of Poetry*]; Odes of the Temple and the Altar, Sacrificial Odes of Zhou, Zhi Jing, p. 578.

39. "Treatises on the Denouncement of the Demons' Den as the Criminals' Region" (1853), in *TR*, 276–94; p. 290 (original translation revised). *Bian yaoxue wei zuili lun* (Treatises on the Denouncement of the Demons' Den as the Criminals' Region; 1853), p. 13. National Library of Australia (website). Available at http://nla.gov.au/nla.gen-vn507184 (accessed October 21, 2010).
40. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 46 (original translation revised). *Taiping zhaoshu*, p. 18.
41. "Proclamations by Imperial Sanction" (1852), in *TR*, 141–51; p. 149 (original translations revised). *Banxing zhaoshu* (Proclamations by Imperial Sanction; 1852), p. 8. National Library of Australia (website). Available at http://nla.gov.au/nla.gen-vn2032244 (accessed October 21, 2010).
42. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 38 (original translation revised). *Taiping zhaoshu*, p. 11.
43. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 39 (original translation revised). *Taiping zhaoshu*, p. 11. Ming and Qing government officials often responded to natural disasters by praying for rain in the temple of the Dragon King. Erik Zürcher, "Key Theological Issues," in Standaert (ed.), *Handbook of Christianity in China*, vol. 1, 632–52; p. 638. For a thorough discussion of Chinese rain rituals, see Daniel L. Overmyer, *Local Religion in North China in the Twentieth Century: The Structure and Organization of Community Rituals and Beliefs* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 18–31.
44. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 42 (original translation revised). *Taiping zhaoshu*, p. 15. Hong Rengan also criticized the people for praying to idols and false gods—"dead demons" (*siyao*)—for blessings, longevity, and protection. *Yingjie gui zhen* (A Hero's Return to the Truth; 1861), pp. 44–45. World Digital Library (website). Available at http://www.wdl.org/en/item/7087/ (accessed November 20, 2013).
45. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 42 (original translation revised). *Taiping zhaoshu*, p. 15.
46. Hong also acknowledged an indigenous tradition of iconoclasm, but claimed that previous iconoclasts (for example, Emperor Wu of Northern Zhou [r. 561–78] and the Tang official Di Renjie [d. 700]) had not gone far enough in their destruction of idols. Significantly, Hong's reference to this indigenous tradition does not suggest that it originally inspired his hostility toward idols. Rather, Hong seems to have used the tradition (and its historical failure) to legitimize his new God-given and biblically inspired mission. For Hong's reference to the indigenous tradition of iconoclasm, see "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 45. *Taiping zhaoshu*, p. 17.
47. Liang, *Quanshi liangyan*, part 1, pp. 40–41.
48. Liang, *Quanshi liangyan*, part 1, p. 30.
49. Liang, *Quanshi liangyan*, part 1, p. 38.

50. Liang's book only mentioned God's giving the Ten Holy Commandments (*shi tiao shengjie*) to Moses on Mount Sinai. Liang, *Quanshi liangyan*, part 7, p. 359.
51. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 41 (original translation revised). *Taiping zhaoshu*, p. 14. Hong paraphrased the text of Exodus 20:4–5 in this extract. *Jiu yizhao shengshu*, Exodus, pp. 30–31.
52. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 43 (original translation revised). *Taiping zhaoshu*, p. 16.
53. Roberts, "A Letter from the American Baptist Missionary Rev. I. J. Roberts," p. 20.
54. Roberts, "A Letter from the American Baptist Missionary Rev. I. J. Roberts," p. 21.
55. Roberts, "A Letter from the American Baptist Missionary Rev. I. J. Roberts," p. 22.
56. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 46. *Taiping zhaoshu*, p. 18.
57. It also overlooks the fact that Hong was expressing anti-Manchu sentiments before his second trip to Guangxi in 1847. Hamberg, *The Chinese Rebel Chief*, p. 45.
58. "The Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature," p. 372 (original translation revised). *Tianqing daoli shu*, p. 7.
59. "Proclamations by Imperial Sanction," p. 143 (original translation revised). *Banxing zhaoshu*, p. 2.
60. "A Joint Proclamation Urging the People to Remain at Peace in Their Occupations" (1853), in *TR*, 443–45; p. 444 (original translation revised). *Taiping Tianguo guihao san nian wuyue chuyi ri gaoyu* (A Proclamation Issued in the Third Year of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, on the First Day of the Fifth Month; 1853). National Library of Australia (website). Available at http://nla.gov.au/nla.gen-vn2051312 (accessed November 17, 2012).
61. Hong Rengan discussed the Manchus' veneration of Buddhas (Fo) and the nine schools of thought (*jiu liu*) in *A Hero's Return to the Truth. Yingjie gui zhen*, p. 10.
62. For this particular ethnic criticism, see "Proclamations by Imperial Sanction," pp. 146–47. *Banxing zhaoshu*, p. 6.
63. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 46. *Taiping zhaoshu*, p. 18.
64. "The Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature," p. 371 (original translation revised). *Tianqing daoli shu*, p. 6. The *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle* also discussed this dilemma. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," p. 64. *Taiping tianri*, p. 19.
65. "Taiping Songs on World Salvation" (1853), in *TR*, 237–50; pp. 239–40 (original translation revised). *Taiping jiushi ge* (Taiping Songs on World Salvation; 1853), p. 2. National Library of Australia (website). Available at http://nla.gov.au/nla.gen-vn2033672 (accessed October 21, 2010).

66. "The Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature," pp. 371–72 (original translations revised). *Tianqing daoli shu*, p. 7. "Ode for Youth" (1851), in *TR*, 162–67; pp. 163–64. *Youxue shi* (Poems for the Young; 1851), pp. 2–3. National Library of Australia (website). Available at http://nla.gov.au/nla.gen-vn509625 (accessed October 21, 2010).
67. The Taipings' claims about the purpose of Jesus' coming are consistent with Liang's explanation of human salvation in *Good Words*. See "On the Meaning of the Savior Jesus' Descent to Earth" (*Lun Jiushizhu Yesu jiangshi zhi yi*), in Liang, *Quanshi liangyan*, part 2, 69–87.
68. Even Hong Rengan, after a lengthy discussion of Jesus' redemptive work, concluded that the Heavenly Father was forced to send the Heavenly King because of the dominance of "demon followers" (*congyaozhe*) in China. *Kaichao Jingzhong junshi Ganwang Hong bao zhi*, p. 13.
69. "Proclamations by Imperial Sanction," p. 150 (original translation revised). *Banxing zhaoshu*, p. 9.
70. "Treatises on Affixing the Imperial Seal on Proclamations and Books for Publication" (1853), in *TR*, 295–308; p. 305. *Zhaoshu gaixi banxing lun* (Treatises on Affixing the Imperial Seal on Proclamations and Books for Publication; 1853), pp. 10–11. New York Public Library (website). Available at http://digitalgallery.nypl.org/nypldigital/id?1706830 (accessed October 22, 2010).
71. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," pp. 67, 72. *Taiping tianri*, pp. 23–24, 30–31.
72. The text itself referred to the idol as Ganyao ("Demon Gan"). Temples for King Gan were the second most important group of temples (after those dedicated to the Three Generations) in the Thistle Mountain area of Guangxi. Weller, *Resistance, Chaos and Control in China*, pp. 56–58.
73. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," p. 74 (original translation revised). *Taiping tianri*, p. 33.
74. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," p. 74. *Taiping tianri*, p. 33.
75. The memoir of Li Gui, who was held as a captive by the Taipings for almost three years, reveals that the Taipings also mutilated the bodies of captives who attempted to escape (for example, tattooing their faces and slicing off their ears and noses). Tobie Meyer-Fong, *What Remains: Coming to Terms with Civil War in 19th Century China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013), pp. 77–78.
76. Alexander Wylie, "A Report by Rev. A. Wylie [a]" (January 1859), in *WR*, 219–22; p. 220. Originally published in *Missionary Magazine and Chronicle*, vol. 23 (July 1859), 179–81.
77. Walter Henry Medhurst, "A Letter by Rev. W. H. Medhurst" (1853), in *WR*, 86–90; p. 89. Originally published in *North China Herald*, November 26, 1853. Augustus Lindley also reported the Taipings' destruction of all Buddhist temples and idols within their reach. Lindley, *Ti-ping Tien-kwoh*, pp. 62, 79, 122, 270.

78. Griffith John, "A Letter from Rev. Griffith John" (July 16, 1860), in *WR*, 231–37; p. 234. Originally published in *Missionary Magazine and Chronicle*, vol. 24 (October 1860), 270–75.
79. Josiah Cox, "Journal of Rev. Josiah Cox [a]" (January 1862), in *WR*, 384–92; p. 388. Originally published in *Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, 3rd series, vol. 9 (April 25, 1862), 72–76.
80. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 46. *Taiping zhaoshu*, p. 18.
81. "Treatises on the Establishment of the Heavenly Capital in Jinling" (1853), in *TR*, 251–76; p. 264 (original translation revised). *Jian Tianjing yu Jinling lun* (Treatises on the Establishment of the Heavenly Capital in Jinling; 1853), pp. 13–14. New York Public Library (website). Available at http://digitalgallery.nypl.org/nypldigital/id?1706987 (accessed October 22, 2010).
82. The Taipings' custom of referring to the Manchus as demons can be seen in the military report of a captured rebel, which describes the killing of ten or more "demon officials" (*yaoguan*) and over two thousand "demon soldiers" (*yaobing*) by the "holy army" (*shengbing*). Transcript of a letter taken from a captured Taiping rebel in Xiangtan district (Hunan), giving an account of the military activities of Xiwang, Xiao Chaogui, who was badly wounded in the chest. September 1852. Guangdong Provincial Archives, Documents of the Chinese Administration in Guangdong. FO 931/1350. 3 ff.
83. "Treatises on the Establishment of the Heavenly Capital in Jinling," p. 267 (original translation revised). *Jian Tianjing yu Jinling lun*, p. 17.
84. Jen, *The Taiping Revolutionary Movement*, pp. 72–77, 83–85, 549–50. Lindley, *Ti-ping Tien-kwoh*, p. 86.
85. Thomas Taylor Meadows, *The Chinese and Their Rebellions: Viewed in Connection with Their National Philosophy, Ethics, Legislation, and Administration* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1856), p. 259.
86. Thomas Taylor Meadows, "A Report from the *North China Herald*" (May 7, 1853), in *WR*, 53–56; p. 54. For another reference to this event, see Andrew Happer, "A Letter by the American Presbyterian Missionary Rev. A. Happer" (June 30, 1853), in *WR*, 75–80; p. 77. Originally published in *Overland China Mail*, July 23, 1853. Joseph Edkins and Augustus Lindley also reported the Taipings' faith in God's support of their rebellion. A young Taiping chief told Edkins that their victories were gained "not by the merit of this or that general, but by the favour of the heavenly Father." Joseph Edkins, "Narrative of a Visit to Nanking," in Jane R. Edkins, *Chinese Scenes and People: With Notices of Christian Missions and Missionary Life in a Series of Letters from Various Parts of China* (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1863), 241–307; p. 255. According to Lindley, Hong responded to the siege of Nanjing in 1860 by instructing the people "to call upon God as the sure means of deliverance from their pressing danger." Lindley, *Ti-ping Tien-kwoh*, p. 268.

87. Richard von Glahn, *The Sinister Way: The Divine and the Demonic in Chinese Religious Culture* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004), p. 118. Barend J. ter Haar, "China's Inner Demons: The Political Impact of the Demonological Paradigm," in Woei Lien Chong (ed.), *China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution: Master Narratives and Post-Mao Counternarratives* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002), 27–68; p. 44.
88. Seiwert, *Popular Religious Movements and Heterodox Sects in Chinese History*, pp. 111–14.
89. In a further example from the Ming dynasty period, hagiographical writings depicted Lin Zhao'en (1517–98), the founder of the Three-in-One Teaching (Sanyi jiao), as a supernatural messiah who subdued demons like Maitreya. Seiwert, *Popular Religious Movements and Heterodox Sects in Chinese History*, p. 356.
90. *NRSV*.
91. "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the New Testament," in *TR*, 226–37; p. 236 (original translation revised). *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu* (The Authorized New Testament [with Hong Xiuquan's Annotations]), Revelation, pp. 13–14. British Library, Chinese Collections, Asian and African Studies Department. 15117.e.19.
92. Hong believed that the woman clothed with the sun was his third mother (after the Heavenly Mother and his earthly mother). Hong claimed that he was reborn through this woman prior to the commencement of his demon-slaying mission. "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the New Testament," p. 236. *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, Revelation, pp. 12–13.
93. "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the New Testament," pp. 227–29, 235–36. *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, Gospel of Matthew, pp. 5, 38. *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, Revelation, pp. 7, 13. "Treatises on the Establishment of the Heavenly Capital in Jinling," p. 266. *Jian Tianjing yu Jinling lun*, p. 16. The Chinese title of the *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle* (*Taiping tianri*) can be literally translated as the "Taiping Heavenly Sun," which is another possible reference to Hong's apocalyptic identity.
94. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," pp. 56–59. *Taiping tianri*, pp. 7–12. Hong even suggested in his annotations that the Demon of Hades was the great red dragon and the serpent of the biblical narrative. "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the New Testament," pp. 236–37. *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, Revelation, pp. 13–14.
95. Revelation and the Gospel of Matthew were Hong's most heavily annotated New Testament books.
96. Liang, *Quanshi liangyan*, part 9, pp. 498–99, 501.
97. Liang, *Quanshi liangyan*, part 9, p. 500.
98. Hong first encountered the Great Flood narrative in Liang's *Good Words*, which dedicated a whole section to the topic of God's flooding the world

as a punishment for human sin. See "On the Great Flood Eliminating the People and Things of the World" (*Lun hongshui jiaomie quan shijie shang zhi ren wu*), in Liang, *Quanshi liangyan*, part 4, 213–20. Liang also discussed the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, offering Hong a further example of God's intervening in history to punish the sinners of the world. Liang, *Quanshi liangyan*, part 5, pp. 271–74.

99. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 39 (original translation revised). *Taiping zhaoshu*, p. 12.
100. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," p. 52. *Taiping tianri*, p. 1. The phrase God's "first great anger" is taken from the *Proclamations by Imperial Sanction*. "Proclamations by Imperial Sanction," p. 142 (original translation revised). *Banxing zhaoshu*, p. 1. In his annotations to Genesis (3:1–21, 6:5–13), Hong similarly claimed that God sent the Great Flood because people (in particular, Eve) had "believed the words of demons" (*xin guihua*). "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the Old Testament," in *TR*, 224–26; p. 225 (original translation revised). *Qinding jiu yizhao shengshu* (The Authorized Old Testament [with Hong Xiuquan's Annotations]), Genesis, pp. 4, 8. British Library, Chinese Collections, Asian and African Studies Department. 15117.e.20.
101. "An Essay on the Awakening of the Age" (1858), in *TR*, 688–95; p. 688 (original translation revised). *Xingshi wen* (Essay on the Awakening of the Age; 1858), p. 1. New York Public Library (website). Available at http://digitalgallery.nypl.org/nypldigital/id?1707740 (accessed October 21, 2010).
102. Jonathan Spence has argued that Hong, because the literal meaning of his surname was "flood," believed that the narrative of the Great Flood was a sign of his own destiny. Spence, *God's Chinese Son*, p. 65.
103. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," p. 52. *Taiping tianri*, p. 1. "The Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature," p. 371. *Tianqing daoli shu*, p. 6. "An Essay on the Awakening of the Age," p. 689. *Xingshi wen*, p. 1. "The Trimetrical Classic," pp. 154–55. *Sanzi jing*, pp. 4–5. The phrase God's "second great anger" is taken from the *Proclamations by Imperial Sanction*. "Proclamations by Imperial Sanction," p. 142 (original translation revised). *Banxing zhaoshu*, p. 1.
104. "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the Old Testament," p. 225 (original translation revised). *Qinding jiu yizhao shengshu*, Genesis, pp. 17–18.
105. Griffith John confirmed that the Taipings saw themselves as the chosen people of God. Griffith John, "A Pamphlet by Rev. Griffith John" (February 1861), in *WR*, 264–80; p. 264. Originally published in Griffith John, *The Chinese Rebellion: The Rev'd. Griffith John's Experience of the Insurgents* (Canton: Friend of China Office, 1861). Augustus Lindley also reported that "many of the Ti-pings have delighted in comparing themselves to the Israelites of old." Lindley, *Ti-ping Tien-kwoh*, p. 308.

106. Hong also identified those themes in the Parable of the Wheat and Tares (Matthew 13:24–30), which he presented as further evidence that God was descending into the world to "exterminate the evil and preserve the upright." "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the New Testament," p. 228 (original translation revised). *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, Gospel of Matthew, p. 21. Hong also connected himself to the Parable of the Wheat and Tares by adopting the title Hewang ("Grain King"), which communicated his status as Lord of "the good people of the Heavenly Kingdom" (represented as grain). "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the New Testament," p. 237 (original translation revised). *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, Revelation, p. 15.
107. "The Shu King," in F. Max Müller (ed.), *The Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 3: *The Sacred Books of China: The Texts of Confucianism*, part 1, trans. James Legge (Oxford: Clarendon, 1879), 31–272 [hereafter *Book of History*]; Books of Shang, Instructions of Yi, p. 95 (original translation revised). Chinese text: *Shangshu* (Book of History), Shang Shu, Instructions of Yi. Chinese Text Project (website). Available at http://ctext.org/shang-shu (accessed August 13, 2011). Hong's interest in this passage may have stemmed from his reading of Liang's *Good Words*, which quoted the classical text in its discussion of divine judgment. Liang, *Quanshi liangyan*, part 1, p. 38.
108. "The Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature," p. 370. *Tianqing daoli shu*, p. 5.
109. *Yingjie gui zhen*, p. 34.
110. "The Trimetrical Classic," p. 160 (original translation revised). *Sanzi jing*, p. 16.
111. These miseries included vermin, mantises, frogs, boils and blains, pestilence and plague, and heavy hail. "The Trimetrical Classic," pp. 153–55. *Sanzi jing*, pp. 3–5.
112. Hong used this phrase to describe the age of Great Peace in his annotations to Revelation 6:12–17. "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the New Testament," p. 235 (original translation revised). *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, Revelation, p. 7.
113. "Taiping Songs on World Salvation," p. 242 (original translation revised). *Taiping jiushi ge*, p. 5.
114. "Proclamations by Imperial Sanction," p. 148 (original translation revised). *Banxing zhaoshu*, p. 7.
115. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 36 (original translation revised). *Taiping zhaoshu*, pp. 9–10. The dating of this text (1845–46) is based on the reckoning of Theodore Hamberg, who obtained his information from Hong Rengan. Hamberg, *The Chinese Rebel Chief*, p. 45.
116. "Treatises on Affixing the Imperial Seal on Proclamations and Books for Publication," p. 302. *Zhaoshu gaixi banxing lun*, p. 7.

117. For references to the Taipings' "egalitarian" ideology, see Jen, *The Taiping Revolutionary Movement*, pp. 143, 150. Weller, *Resistance, Chaos and Control in China*, pp. 33, 82. Xinzhong Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 242.
118. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 28 (original translation revised). *Taiping zhaoshu*, p. 3.
119. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 37 (original translation revised). *Taiping zhaoshu*, p. 10.
120. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 35 (original translation revised). *Taiping zhaoshu*, p. 9. The *Book of Heavenly Commandments* also included this statement in its discussion of the seventh commandment. "The Book of Heavenly Commandments," p. 121. *Tiantiao shu*, p. 7.
121. Protestant missionaries and other foreign observers reported the Taipings' use of these terms. Charles Taylor, *Five Years in China: With Some Account of the Great Rebellion, and a Description of St. Helena* (Nashville, TN: J. B. McFerrin, 1860), p. 345. Meadows, *The Chinese and Their Rebellions*, p. 263. Meadows, "A Report from the *North China Herald*," p. 56. Lindley, *Ti-ping Tien-kwoh*, pp. 145, 236, 364.
122. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 37 (original translation revised). *Taiping zhaoshu*, p. 10.
123. "The Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature," pp. 390–91. *Tianqing daoli shu*, pp. 30–31. The same hierarchical interpretation of harmony was later expressed in the *Essay on the Awakening of the Age*. "An Essay on the Awakening of the Age," p. 692. *Xingshi wen*, p. 5. The *Taiping Rules and Regulations* (*Taiping tiaogui*; 1852) also associated harmony with obedience to "superiors" (*shang*). "Taiping Rules and Regulations" (1852), in *TR*, 139–41; p. 139. *Taiping tiaogui* (Taiping Rules and Regulations; 1852), p. 1. National Library of Australia (website). Available at http://nla.gov.au/nla.gen-vn2032174 (accessed October 21, 2010).
124. "Ode for Youth," p. 166. *Youxue shi*, p. 9. The *Taiping Rules and Regulations* reveals that women could serve as both officers and soldiers in the Taiping army. "Taiping Rules and Regulations," p. 141. *Taiping tiaogui*, p. 4. The doctrine of the three obediences (*sancong*) was, like its partner the four virtues (womanly virtue, speech, appearance, and work), derived from the classical texts of Confucianism (in particular, the *Book of Rites*). Dorothy Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers: Women and Culture in Seventeenth-Century China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994), pp. 6, 145. For the original text, see "The Li Ki, I–X," in F. Max Müller (ed.), *The Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 27: *The Sacred Books of China: The Texts of Confucianism*, part 3, trans. James Legge (Oxford: Clarendon, 1885), 61–479 [hereafter *Book of Rites* [a]]; Jiao Te Sheng, section 3, p. 441. Chinese text: *Liji* (Book of Rites), Jiao Te Sheng, 35.

Chinese Text Project (website). Available at http://ctext.org/liji (accessed June 3, 2011).

125. The following chapter will discuss the Confucian system of relationships that appears to have influenced the Taipings' concept of harmony.
126. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 34 (original translation revised). *Taiping zhaoshu*, p. 8.
127. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 35. *Taiping zhaoshu*, p. 9.
128. "The Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature," p. 388 (original translation revised). *Tianqing daoli shu*, p. 28.
129. Previous studies have shown that the Taipings failed to put this ideal economic system into practice. For a discussion of the Taipings' organizational problems at the local level, see Bernhardt, "Elite and Peasant During the Taiping Occupation of the Jiangnan, 1860–1864."
130. "The Land System of the Heavenly Dynasty" (1853), in *TR*, 309–20; pp. 313–14, 320. *Tianchao tianmu zhidu* (Land System of the Heavenly Dynasty; 1853), pp. 1–2, 8. National Library of Australia (website). Available at http://nla.gov.au/nla.gen-vn2029637 (accessed January 23, 2012). Public granaries were not invented by Hong and the Taipings. Ever-normal and community granaries were, in fact, used by successive Qing emperors to relieve shortages and famines. For a discussion of the Qing state granary system, see chapter 6 of Lillian M. Li, *Fighting Famine in North China: State, Market, and Environmental Decline, 1690s–1990s* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), 166–95.
131. "The Land System of the Heavenly Dynasty," p. 314 (original translation revised). *Tianchao tianmu zhidu*, p. 2.
132. Xia Chuntao has challenged this misleading claim, arguing that the *Land System of the Heavenly Dynasty* did not promote a "utopia" (*shiwaitaoyuan*) without distinctions of status. In particular, he claims that the book's system of land distribution did not apply to all social classes and that the economic statuses of the people were "not at all equal." Xia, *Taiping Tianguo zongjiao*, pp. 194, 201.
133. "The Land System of the Heavenly Dynasty," p. 316. *Tianchao tianmu zhidu*, p. 4.
134. Seiwert, *Popular Religious Movements and Heterodox Sects in Chinese History*, p. 34.
135. Seiwert, *Popular Religious Movements and Heterodox Sects in Chinese History*, pp. 37–38.
136. Seiwert, *Popular Religious Movements and Heterodox Sects in Chinese History*, pp. 90–91. Maitreyan millenarianism later inspired the Eight Trigrams uprising of 1813. The Eight Trigrams sect believed that the Unborn Mother (Wusheng Laomu) would send down the Buddha Maitreya to eliminate all wickedness and redeem the faithful in a new per-

fect world. Susan Naquin, *Millenarian Rebellion in China: The Eight Trigrams Uprising of 1813* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1976), pp. 9–14. Lian Xi, *Redeemed by Fire: The Rise of Popular Christianity in Modern China* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), pp. 73–74, 237.

137. Liang discussed the concept of Great Peace in his Christian book and may have originally attracted Hong to the concept. Liang, *Quanshi liangyan*, part 7, pp. 365–66.
138. Liang, *Quanshi liangyan*, part 2, p. 87.
139. *NRSV* (capitalization added). *Xin yizhao shengshu* (The New Testament [The Gospel of Matthew]; 1853), pp. 5, 14. National Library of Australia (website). Available at http://nla.gov.au/nla.gen-vn2033681 (accessed October 23, 2010).
140. "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the New Testament," p. 227 (original translation revised). *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, Gospel of Matthew, p. 6.
141. "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the New Testament," pp. 232, 235, 237. *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, 1 Corinthians, p. 19. *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, Revelation, pp. 4, 22. For a further reference to the Little Heaven, see "The Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature," p. 379. *Tianqing daoli shu*, pp. 16–17.
142. This interpretation contrasts with that of Barend ter Haar, who has suggested that the Taipings' association of an earthly city with the perfect world was "derived from the demonological messianic paradigm," rather than the Chinese Christian literature. Ter Haar, "China's Inner Demons," p. 52.
143. Premillennialists (such as the American Millerites) believed that the second coming of Christ would usher in that period of one thousand years, while postmillennialists (such as Jonathan Edwards [1703–58]) maintained that his return to earth would follow the millennium. J. F. C. Harrison, *The Second Coming: Popular Millenarianism, 1780–1850* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), p. 4. Stephen Hunt, "The Rise, Fall and Return of Post-Millenarianism," in Stephen Hunt (ed.), *Christian Millenarianism: From the Early Church to Waco* (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2001), 50–61; p. 50.
144. Grant Underwood, *The Millenarian World of Early Mormonism* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1993), pp. 30–32.
145. Underwood, *The Millenarian World of Early Mormonism*, pp. 28–30.
146. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," pp. 37–38. *Taiping zhaoshu*, pp. 10–11.
147. "The Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature," p. 388. *Tianqing daoli shu*, p. 28. "Confucian Analects," in James Legge (trans.), *The Chinese Classics*, vol. 1: *Confucian Analects, the Great Learning, and the*

Doctrine of the Mean, 2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon, 1893), 137–354 [hereafter *Analects*]; 12:5, p. 253.

148. Liang, *Quanshi liangyan*, part 9, p. 485.
149. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," pp. 35–36 (original translation revised). *Taiping zhaoshu*, p. 9. *Book of Rites* [a], Li Yun, section 1, pp. 364–66. Chinese text: *Liji*, Li Yun, 1.
150. It also challenges Joseph Esherick's claim that in the ideology of the Taipings "the stress was more on surviving an impending disaster than on welcoming an imminent paradise." Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising*, p. 322.
151. Zeng Guofan, "A Proclamation against the Bandits of Guangdong and Guangxi" (1854), in Pei-kai Cheng, Michael Lestz, and Jonathan D. Spence (eds), *The Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection* (London: W. W. Norton, 1999), 146–49; p. 147. For examples of this argument, see Shen Jiarong, *Taiping Tianguo shilüe* (A Historical Survey of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom) (Nanjing: Nanjing chubanshe, 1992), p. 54. Zhao Chunchen, "Taiping Tianguo yu jindai zaoqi de Zhong Xi wenhua jiaoliu" (The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom and Chinese-Western Cultural Exchange in the Early Modern Period), in Dai He (ed.), *Taiping Tianguo yu Zhong Xi wenhua: Jinian Taiping Tianguo qiyi 150 zhounian lunwen ji* (The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom and Chinese-Western Culture: A Collection of Essays Commemorating the 150th Anniversary of the Taiping Uprising) (Guangzhou: Guangdong renmin chubanshe, 2003), 21–32; p. 23. Chen Huaxin, "Shi lun Hong Xiuquan sixiang de yuanyuan" (On the Origins of Hong Xiuquan's Ideology), in Xia and Deng (eds), *Hong Xiuquan sixiang yanjiu lunwen ji*, 1–27; p. 4.
152. Li Jinquan, "Taiping Tianguo zongjiao sixiang yu Zhong Xi wenhua de guanxi" (The Religious Ideology of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom and Chinese-Western Cultural Relations), in Dai (ed.), *Taiping Tianguo yu Zhong Xi wenhua*, 11–20; p. 16.
153. Joseph Levenson, for example, has used the doctrine of the brotherhood and equality of humankind to highlight the Taipings' challenge to the traditional, Confucian culture of China. Levenson, "Confucian and Taiping 'Heaven,'" p. 451.
154. Although Yang was originally a charcoal burner and thus less educated than Hong, the official publications that he wrote or commissioned (for example, the *Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature*) show that he—like Hong—had absorbed core Confucian values and assumptions.
155. The two most outstanding examples are the ideologies of the White Lotus (1796–1804) and Eight Trigrams (1813) uprisings.
156. William Rowe has suggested that this form of Chinese (anti-Western) nationalism was "a very fruitful tool of early Taiping recruitment." Rowe, *China's Last Empire*, p. 186.

Chapter 4

1. "The Profession of Faith of the 318 Fathers," in Norman P. Tanner (ed.), *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 1: *Nicaea I to Lateran V* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1990), 5; p. 5.
2. "Council of Chalcedon, 451." Internet History Sourcebooks Project (website). Available at http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/chalcedon.html (accessed August 16, 2011).
3. "Council of Chalcedon, 451."
4. Augustine, *On the Trinity*, ed. Gareth B. Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 69.
5. "Quicunque Vult, or The Creed of St. Athanasius." Internet History Sourcebooks Project (website). Available at http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/quicumque.html (accessed August 16, 2011).
6. Anselm, "Why God Became a Man (*Cur Deus Homo*)," in Jasper Hopkins and Herbert Richardson (eds), *Anselm of Canterbury*, vol. 3 (New York: Edwin Mellen, 1976), 49–137; p. 92.
7. Anselm, "Why God Became a Man (*Cur Deus Homo*)," p. 102. Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), p. 420.
8. Anselm, "Why God Became a Man (*Cur Deus Homo*)," p. 118.
9. Wylie, "A Report by Rev. A. Wylie [a]," p. 221.
10. W. N. Hall, "A Letter from Rev. W. N. Hall" (January–February 1861), in *WR*, 280–81; p. 281. Originally published in *Missionary Herald*, vol. 57 (September 1861), 137–38. William Armstrong Russell also believed that the Taipings were "putting the Heavenly King on a level with Jesus." Russell, "A Letter from Rev. W. H. [*sic*] Russell," p. 382.
11. Issachar Jacox Roberts, "A Letter from Rev. I. J. Roberts [b]" (January 22, 1862), in *WR*, 314–16; p. 314. Originally published in *North China Herald*, February 4, 1862.
12. Josiah Cox, "Journal of Rev. Josiah Cox [b]" (December 1861), in *WR*, 308–14; pp. 311–12. Originally published in *Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, 3rd series, vol. 9 (April 25, 1862), 69–72.
13. Joseph Edkins, "A Report by Rev. Joseph Edkins" (1860), in *WR*, 241–46; p. 241. Originally published in *North China Herald*, August 11, 1860.
14. John, "A Letter from Rev. Griffith John," p. 235. Another metaphorical interpretation was put forward by Augustus Lindley, who claimed that the title "younger brother" simply expressed Hong's position as "our Saviour's faithful servant and disciple." Unlike Edkins and John, Lindley (incorrectly) believed that the Taipings acknowledged the divinity of Jesus. Lindley, *Ti-ping Tien-kwoh*, pp. 86, 212–13.
15. John Hobson, "A Letter from Rev. John Hobson" (May 18, 1861), in *WR*, 298; p. 298. Original document obtained from the Archives of the

Church Missionary Society, China Letters (Box H–R). E. G. Fishbourne, *Impressions of China, and the Present Revolution: Its Progress and Prospects* (London: Seeley, Jackson, and Halliday, 1855), p. 262.

16. It is for this reason that Edkins associated the Taipings with the heresy of Arianism. Edkins, "Narrative of a Visit to Nanking," p. 279.
17. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," p. 54. *Taiping tianri*, p. 4.
18. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," p. 54 (original translation revised). *Taiping tianri*, pp. 4–5.
19. This combination of iconoclasm and anthropomorphism was unsuccessfully challenged by Joseph Edkins. When Edkins, during a conversation on idols and images, asserted that "God is without form or image," a young Taiping chief replied that "it was wrong to say, absolutely, that God is without form, for the Tien-wang had certainly seen Him in heaven." Edkins, "Narrative of a Visit to Nanking," p. 269.
20. "Important Observations Regarding Heavenly Principles," p. 352 (original translations revised). Medhurst, *Tianli yaolun*, p. 8. *Tianli yaolun* (Important Discourses on Heavenly Principles [Taiping version]; 1854), p. 8. National Library of Australia (website). Available at http://nla.gov.au/nla.gen-vn501053 (accessed October 23, 2010).
21. "Important Observations Regarding Heavenly Principles," p. 354 (original translation revised). Medhurst, *Tianli yaolun*, p. 12. *Tianli yaolun* [Taiping version], p. 11.
22. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," pp. 54, 59. *Taiping tianri*, pp. 4, 12.
23. "The Trimetrical Classic," p. 159. *Sanzi jing*, p. 13.
24. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," p. 60. *Taiping tianri*, p. 14.
25. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," p. 60 (original translation revised). *Taiping tianri*, p. 13.
26. The title First Moon complemented the association of Hong with the sun in Taiping documents.
27. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," p. 60 (original translation revised). *Taiping tianri*, pp. 13–14.
28. The *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle* does not indicate whether Jesus and the Heavenly Elder Sister-in-law had children of their own in heaven.
29. Liang, *Quanshi liangyan*, part 1, p. 43.
30. Arthur P. Wolf, "Gods, Ghosts, and Ancestors," in Arthur P. Wolf (ed.), *Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1974), 131–82; pp. 134, 139.
31. *NRSV* (original translation revised). *Jiu yizhao shengshu*, Genesis, p. 2.
32. "The Imperially Composed Thousand Word Edict" (1854), in *TR*, 408–15; p. 411 (original translation revised). *Yuzhi qianzi zhao* (Imperially Composed Thousand Word Edict; 1854), p. 5. New York Public Library (website). Available at http://digitalgallery.nypl.org/nypldigital/id?1707673 (accessed October 22, 2010).

33. Edkins, "Narrative of a Visit to Nanking," pp. 289–90.
34. Wolf, "Gods, Ghosts, and Ancestors," p. 145. The Stove God is another example of a deity that was popularly represented as a man with a wife and children. Francesca Bray, *Technology and Gender: Fabrics of Power in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), p. 112.
35. For references to Jesus as the "son of Shangdi," see *Xin yizhao shengshu*, p. 4 (Figure 2.2 of Chapter 2).
36. "The Book of Heavenly Commandments," p. 119 (original translation revised). *Tiantiao shu*, p. 6. The Taipings' reading of Shengshen as Holy God (a synonym for the Heavenly Father Shangdi), rather than Holy Spirit (the original meaning of the missionary translators), will be discussed in Chapter 6.
37. Roberts, "A Letter from Rev. I. J. Roberts [a]," p. 264.
38. Edkins, "Narrative of a Visit to Nanking," p. 270. A report by Garnet Wolseley (1833–1913) further explains that, during a meeting between Hong and Issachar Roberts, all present repeated a doxology "which was originally composed by him [Roberts] for the use of his scholars at Canton." G. J. Wolseley, *Narrative of the War with China in 1860* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1862), p. 337.
39. According to Lindley, the Taipings recited the following doxology at the beginning of their Sabbath services: "We praise Thee, O God, our Heavenly Father; We praise Jesus, the Saviour of the world; We praise the Holy Spirit, the sacred intelligence; *We praise the Three persons, united as the True Spirit.*" Lindley, *Ti-ping Tien-kwoh*, p. 319.
40. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," p. 52 (original translation revised). *Taiping tianri*, p. 1.
41. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," pp. 35, 40–41 (original translations revised). *Taiping zhaoshu*, pp. 9, 12–13.
42. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," pp. 26, 41. *Taiping zhaoshu*, pp. 2, 13.
43. "The Book of Heavenly Decrees and Proclamations" (1852), in *TR*, 97–110; pp. 107–8 (original translation revised). *Tianming zhaozhi shu* (Book of Heavenly Decrees and Proclamations; 1852), p. 11. National Library of Australia (website). Available at http://nla.gov.au/nla.gen-vn2032025 (accessed October 21, 2010).
44. "Taiping Songs on World Salvation," p. 239 (original translation revised). *Taiping jiushi ge*, p. 1.
45. "The Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature," p. 369 (original translation revised). *Tianqing daoli shu*, p. 4.
46. "The Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature," p. 369 (original translation revised). *Tianqing daoli shu*, p. 4.

47. Yang Xiuqing later emerged as a third son of God, but his filial relation to God (unlike that of Jesus and Hong) was not explicitly discussed in official Taiping publications. It was, however, later acknowledged by Hong in his annotations to the Bible.
48. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," pp. 57, 62 (original translation revised). *Taiping tianri*, pp. 9, 17.
49. "Taiping Songs on World Salvation," p. 242 (original translation revised). *Taiping jiushi ge*, p. 4.
50. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," p. 61. *Taiping tianri*, p. 14. "An Essay on the Awakening of the Age," p. 690. *Xingshi wen*, p. 3. In *A Hero's Return to the Truth*, Hong Rengan referred to Jesus as the Heavenly Elder Brother (Tianxiong), the Great Elder Brother (Daxiong), and the "elder brother" (*ge*). *Yingjie gui zhen*, p. 4.
51. "Treatises on Affixing the Imperial Seal on Proclamations and Books for Publication," p. 305. *Zhaoshu gaixi banxing lun*, p. 10.
52. "Proclamations by Imperial Sanction," p. 144 (original translation revised). *Banxing zhaoshu*, p. 2. "Book of Declarations of the Divine Will Made during the Heavenly Father's Descent to Earth [II]" (1853), in *TR*, 197–220; p. 212. *Tianfu xiafan zhaoshu* (Book of Declarations Made during the Heavenly Father's Descent to Earth [II]; 1853), p. 22. National Library of Australia (website). Available at http://nla.gov.au/nla.gen-vn2029594 (accessed October 21, 2010). On the first of these claims, see also "Treatises on the Establishment of the Heavenly Capital in Jinling," p. 256. *Jian Tianjing yu Jinling lun*, p. 5.
53. "Taiping Songs on World Salvation," p. 240. *Taiping jiushi ge*, p. 2.
54. "Taiping Songs on World Salvation," p. 240 (original translations revised). *Taiping jiushi ge*, p. 2.
55. The inclusion of Yang in the narrative relates to both his religious role (charismatic communicator for the Heavenly Father) and political rise within the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, which will be discussed in Chapter 6.
56. "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the New Testament," p. 236 (original translation revised). *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, Revelation, p. 12.
57. Hong did not deny the fact that he had an earthly mother who had given birth to him. In his annotations to the New Testament, Hong claimed that he and Jesus later entered the wombs of other women (in Jesus' case, Mary) in order to be born into the world. "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the New Testament," p. 236. *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, Revelation, pp. 12–13.
58. "The Book of Heavenly Decrees and Proclamations," p. 108 (original translation revised). *Tianming zhaozhi shu*, p. 11. The implementation of Hong's command is confirmed by a letter taken from a captured Taiping rebel in 1852, which referred to Hong simply as "my Lord the Heavenly

King." Guangdong Provincial Archives, Documents of the Chinese Administration in Guangdong. FO 931/1350.

59. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," pp. 45–46 (original translations revised). *Taiping zhaoshu*, pp. 17–18.
60. One of Issachar Roberts' reports confirms that he, at an official meeting in November 1860, "endeavoured to improve" Hong's theological views. Issachar Jacox Roberts, "A Letter from Rev. I. J. Roberts [c]" (November 13, 1860), in *WR*, 254–55; p. 255. Originally published in *Overland China Mail*, December 15, 1860. Joseph Edkins also attempted to correct Hong's opinions through religious writings. During a visit to Nanjing in early 1861, Edkins handed his papers on the divinity of Jesus to a young Taiping chief. Edkins, "Narrative of a Visit to Nanking," pp. 267–68.
61. "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the New Testament," p. 229 (original translation revised). *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, Gospel of Mark, p. 21.
62. "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the New Testament," p. 231 (original translation revised). *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, Romans, p. 1.
63. "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the New Testament," p. 230 (original translation revised). *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, Gospel of Luke, p. 2.
64. "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the New Testament," p. 229. *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, Gospel of Mark, p. 1.
65. "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the New Testament," p. 229 (original translation revised). *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, Gospel of Mark, p. 3.
66. "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the New Testament," pp. 227–28 (original translation revised). *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, Gospel of Matthew, pp. 10–11, 13.
67. "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the New Testament," p. 231 (original translation revised). *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, Acts of the Apostles, p. 3.
68. In his notes on Mark 2:3–12, Hong stated that the people who observed Jesus' miracles glorified Shangdi and "did not glorify the Elder Brother as God." "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the New Testament," p. 229. *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, Gospel of Mark, p. 3.
69. "The Book of Heavenly Decrees and Proclamations," p. 108 (original translation revised). *Tianming zhaozhi shu*, pp. 11–12.
70. Hong's biblical annotations also highlight his effort to balance the uniqueness of Jesus and the exclusive divinity of God. In his annotations to Luke 7:16, Hong asserted that the miraculous raising of the widow's son at Nain confirmed that Jesus was a "great prophet" (*tai shengren*; literally, "great *holy* person"), but not God (Shangdi). "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the New Testament," p. 230. *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, Gospel of Luke, pp. 14–15.

71. Wang Qingcheng and Jonathan Spence have both recognized that the Taipings saw Jesus as a non-divine being, but neither of their studies analyzes the reasons behind that particular belief. Wang, *Taiping Tianguo de lishi he sixiang*, p. 305. Spence, *God's Chinese Son*, p. 291.
72. Liang claimed that the divine and human natures were united at the incarnation. He also emphasized the divine nature of Jesus in his discussion of the resurrection. Liang, *Quanshi liangyan*, part 2, pp. 72, 76, 121.
73. Liang, *Quanshi liangyan*, part 7, p. 345.
74. "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the New Testament," p. 230 (original translation revised). *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, Gospel of Mark, pp. 21–22.
75. Hong's annotations to Acts 7:55–60 show that he found further support for his revelation (and the specific idea that God and Jesus existed as two separate beings) in Stephen's vision of Jesus standing at the right hand of God. "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the New Testament," p. 231. *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, Acts of the Apostles, pp. 12–13.
76. *Book of Poetry*, Greater Odes of the Kingdom, Decade of Dang, Dang, p. 505 (original translation revised). Singular here denotes Shangdi's apparent ontological oneness in the Chinese classics, rather than suggesting that he was the only recognized deity in ancient China (exclusive monotheism). The Chinese classics (in particular, the *Book of History*, the *Book of Poetry*, and the *Book of Rites*) refer to Shangdi on many occasions, but none of those references suggest that the Supreme Lord was composed of multiple persons or elements. According to Archie Lee, this conception of Shangdi as a unitary deity first emerged during the Zhou dynasty (1045/1040–256 BCE). Lee (following Robert Eno) argues that during this period, because of the need to universalize authority in a unified country, Shangdi became "a single deity of ethical authority that directed and dictated dynastic history and politics." Archie C. C. Lee, "Scriptural Translations and Cross-Textual Hermeneutics," in Felix Wilfred (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Christianity in Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 121–33; p. 128.
77. *Book of History*, Books of Shang, Announcement of Tang, pp. 89–90 (original translation revised). *Book of History*, Books of Shang, Instructions of Yi, p. 95. Chinese texts: *Shangshu*, Shang Shu, Announcement of Tang, Instructions of Yi.
78. On nourishment: *Book of Poetry*, Odes of the Temple and the Altar, Sacrificial Odes of Zhou, Chen Gong, pp. 582–83. The *Book of History* and the *Book of Poetry* both discussed the political function of God, using the examples of Wen and Wu to show that Shangdi rewarded righteous kings with the mandate to rule. On Wen and Wu: *Book of History*, Books of Zhou, Announcement of King Kang, p. 244. Chinese text: *Shangshu*,

Zhou Shu, Announcement of King Kang. On Wen: *Book of Poetry*, Greater Odes of the Kingdom, Decade of King Wen, Da Ming, pp. 433–35.

79. An extract from one of Yang Xiuqing's publications highlights this link between the Taipings' salvation discourse and their doctrine of God: "From ancient times the true God was Shangdi alone. To honor him as the Heavenly Father is our first duty." "Taiping Songs on World Salvation," p. 242 (original translation revised). *Taiping jiushi ge*, p. 5.
80. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 46 (original translation revised). *Taiping zhaoshu*, p. 18.
81. "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the New Testament," pp. 234–35 (original translation revised). *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, 1 John, pp. 6–7. The statement "besides me you shall have no other gods" (taken from Exodus 20:3), which most Christians would recognize as the first commandment, was discussed by Hong in his commentary on the second commandment ("Do not worship false gods"). "The Book of Heavenly Commandments," p. 120. *Tiantiao shu*, p. 6.
82. *Yingjie gui zhen*, p. 8.
83. *Yingjie gui zhen*, p. 9.
84. "The Book of Heavenly Commandments," p. 120 (original translation revised). *Tiantiao shu*, p. 7.
85. *Jiu yizhao shengshu*, Exodus, p. 31. For one of many examples of Liang's using the title God Jehovah, see Liang, *Quanshi liangyan*, part 1, p. 17.
86. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 44 (original translation revised). *Taiping zhaoshu*, p. 16.
87. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," pp. 59–60 (original translation revised). *Taiping tianri*, p. 13.
88. This taboo was strictly enforced in late imperial China. Examiners, for example, would fail candidates who used taboo characters (such as those from imperial names) in their essays. Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China*, p. 206.
89. In his proclamation of December 1851, Hong asserted that the Heavenly Father alone was to be addressed as Ye ("Father"). "The Book of Heavenly Decrees and Proclamations," p. 108. *Tianming zhaozhi shu*, p. 12. Rudolf Wagner has argued that the Taipings viewed Yehuohua as a standard Chinese name, with Ye as the family name and Huohua as the personal name of God. Wagner, *Reenacting the Heavenly Vision*, p. 32.
90. Despite his exposure to the Trinitarian orthodoxy of the missionaries (and thus the notion that the Father and Jesus were equal members of the Godhead), Hong Rengan continued to elevate the titles of the Heavenly Father above those of Jesus and Hong in his official publications. *Yingjie gui zhen*, pp. 3–4, 7, 13. Hong Xiuquan also maintained this practice in his annotations to the Old and New Testaments. He

raised the various titles of God (Shangdi, Holy God, Heavenly Father) three levels, those of Jesus (Christ, Crown Prince, Elder Brother) two levels, and the personal pronoun *zhen* ("I") one level. See *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, 1 John, pp. 5–7.

91. Evelyn S. Rawski, *The Last Emperors: A Social History of Qing Imperial Institutions* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), p. 49. An official list of Taiping and secret society leaders lifted the name of the ruling emperor Xianfeng four levels above the main text. List of sixteen Taiping leaders and seven secret society leaders in Guangdong and Hunan as supplied by Hong Daquan. July 1852. Guangdong Provincial Archives, Documents of the Chinese Administration in Guangdong. FO 931/1346. 3 ff.
92. The five relationships are discussed in the *Doctrine of the Mean* and the *Mencius*. "The Doctrine of the Mean," in Legge (trans.), *The Chinese Classics*, vol. 1, 382–434 [hereafter *Doctrine of the Mean*]; chapter 20, pp. 406–7. "The Works of Mencius," in James Legge (trans.), *The Chinese Classics*, vol. 2: *The Works of Mencius*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Clarendon, 1895), 125–502 [hereafter *Mencius*]; 3A:4, pp. 251–52.
93. The *Classic of Filial Piety* taught, for example, that "the reverence paid to a father makes (all) sons pleased" and "the reverence paid to an elder brother makes (all) younger brothers pleased." "The Hsiao King," in Müller (ed.), *The Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 3, 465–88 [hereafter *Classic of Filial Piety*]; Amplification of "The All-embracing Rule of Conduct" in Chapter 1, p. 482. Chinese text: *Xiao jing* (Classic of Filial Piety), Amplification of "The All-embracing Rule of Conduct" in Chapter 1. Chinese Text Project (website). Available at http://ctext.org/xiao-jing (accessed October 13, 2011).
94. "Taiping Songs on World Salvation," p. 247 (original translation revised). *Taiping jiushi ge*, p. 9.
95. "Ode for Youth," p. 165. *Youxue shi*, p. 8.
96. "Ode for Youth," p. 166. *Youxue shi*, p. 10.
97. "Poems by the Heavenly Father" (1857), in *TR*, 585–666; p. 662 (original translation revised). "Tianfu shi" (Poems of the Heavenly Father; 1857), in Wang Qingcheng (ed.), *Yingyin Taiping Tianguo wenxian shi'er zhong* (Twelve Reproduced Documents of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom) (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2004), 85–231 [hereafter *Tianfu shi*]; p. 225 (poem 475).
98. "Taiping Ceremonial Regulations [I]" (1852), in *TR*, 124–31; p. 129 (original translation revised). *Taiping lizhi* (Taiping Ceremonial Regulations; 1852), p. 5. National Library of Australia (website). Available at http://nla.gov.au/nla.gen-vn2032190 (accessed October 21, 2010).

99. "Taiping Ceremonial Regulations [I]," p. 130. *Taiping lizhi*, p. 6.
100. Standaert, *Yang Tingyun*, pp. 127–28, 130–31.
101. Standaert, *Yang Tingyun*, pp. 109, 116–18.
102. Standaert, *Yang Tingyun*, pp. 123–26, 129–30.
103. Following a two-month stay with Issachar Roberts in 1847, Hong was able to develop his theology without any guidance from missionaries.

Chapter 5

1. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 32 (original translation revised). *Taiping zhaoshu*, p. 7. The dating of this text (1844–45) is based on the reckoning of Hong Rengan and Theodore Hamberg. Hong Rengan, "Hong Xiuquan's Background," p. 4. Hamberg, *The Chinese Rebel Chief*, p. 45.
2. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 30 (original translation revised). *Taiping zhaoshu*, p. 5.
3. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 31. *Taiping zhaoshu*, p. 6.
4. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," pp. 56–57 (original translation revised). *Taiping tianri*, p. 9.
5. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," p. 57. *Taiping tianri*, p. 9.
6. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," p. 57 (original translation revised). *Taiping tianri*, p. 9.
7. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," p. 57 (original translation revised). *Taiping tianri*, p. 10.
8. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," p. 57. *Taiping tianri*, p. 10.
9. "The Thirty-Nine Articles" (1571, 1662). Internet History Sourcebooks Project (website). Available at http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1571-39articles.asp (accessed April 2, 2012).
10. "The Thirty-Nine Articles."
11. Article XV ("Of Christ Alone without Sin") speaks of Jesus as "the Lamb without spot."
12. Liang, *Quanshi liangyan*, part 1, pp. 17–20.
13. Liang, *Quanshi liangyan*, part 1, p. 21.
14. Liang, *Quanshi liangyan*, part 1, p. 22.
15. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 33 (original translation revised). *Taiping zhaoshu*, p. 7.
16. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," p. 65 (original translation revised). *Taiping tianri*, p. 21.
17. "An Essay on the Awakening of the Age," p. 691 (original translation revised). *Xingshi wen*, p. 3. "Taiping Songs on World Salvation," p. 243 (original translation revised). *Taiping jiushi ge*, p. 6.
18. "The Trimetrical Classic," p. 160 (original translation revised). *Sanzi jing*, p. 15.

19. "The Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature," p. 366 (original translation revised). *Tianqing daoli shu*, p. 1 (preface).
20. *Doctrine of the Mean*, chapter 1, p. 383 (original translation revised).
21. *Mencius*, 6A:2, pp. 395–96 (original translation revised).
22. *Mencius*, 6A:6, pp. 402–3 (original translation revised). For a more detailed discussion of Mencius' anthropology, see Bryan W. Van Norden, "The Virtue of Righteousness in Mencius," in Kwong-loi Shun and David B. Wong (eds), *Confucian Ethics: A Comparative Study of Self, Autonomy, and Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 148–82.
23. *Mencius*, 6A:7, p. 404.
24. On material objects: *Mencius*, 6A:15, p. 418. On reducing personal desires: *Mencius*, 7B:35, p. 497.
25. "The Great Learning," in Legge (trans.), *The Chinese Classics*, vol. 1, 355–81 [hereafter *Great Learning*]; The Text of Confucius, pp. 357–58 (original translation revised).
26. *Great Learning*, Commentary of the Philosopher Zeng, chapter 7, p. 368. For a more detailed discussion of Confucian ideas on self-cultivation, see Chung-ying Cheng, "A Theory of Confucian Selfhood: Self-Cultivation and Free Will in Confucian Philosophy," in Shun and Wong (eds), *Confucian Ethics*, 124–47.
27. For a discussion of Neo-Confucian approaches to human nature and self-cultivation, see Tu Wei-ming, *Humanity and Self-Cultivation: Essays in Confucian Thought* (Boston, MA: Cheng & Tsui, 1998), 71–82.
28. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," pp. 25–26 (original translations revised). *Taiping zhaoshu*, pp. 1–2.
29. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," pp. 26–30 (original translation revised). *Taiping zhaoshu*, pp. 2–5.
30. The Taipings later associated gambling with the tenth commandment in the *Book of Heavenly Commandments.* "The Book of Heavenly Commandments," p. 123. *Tiantiao shu*, p. 8.
31. Liang, *Quanshi liangyan*, part 2, p. 88.
32. Liang, *Quanshi liangyan*, part 8, p. 401. Spence, *God's Chinese Son*, p. 62.
33. The idea that Hong edited the *Second Exhortation* following his stay with Roberts is based not only on the biblical content of the text, but also on Theodore Hamberg's claim that Hong "afterwards made considerable additions" to the odes, essays, and exhortations that he had written between 1845 and 1846. Hamberg, *The Chinese Rebel Chief*, p. 45.
34. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 41 (original translation revised). *Taiping zhaoshu*, p. 14.
35. "The Book of Heavenly Commandments," pp. 119–22 (original translations revised). *Tiantiao shu*, pp. 6–8.

36. "The Book of Heavenly Commandments," p. 112. *Tiantiao shu*, p. 1.
37. "The Book of Heavenly Commandments," p. 123 (original translation revised). *Tiantiao shu*, p. 8.
38. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," p. 64 (original translation revised). *Taiping tianri*, p. 19.
39. *NRSV* (capitalization added). *Xin yizhao shengshu*, p. 6.
40. *NRSV*. Hong quoted Matthew 5:18 in claiming that "not one speck or stroke of the law shall be abolished." "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the New Testament," p. 232 (original translation revised). *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, Ephesians, p. 2. *Xin yizhao shengshu*, p. 6.
41. In *A Hero's Return to the Truth*, Hong Rengan claimed that the blessings of heaven were awarded to those who "obeyed the Ten Heavenly Commandments" and sought redemption for their sins in Jesus Christ. *Yingjie gui zhen*, p. 42.
42. "The Trimetrical Classic," p. 161 (original translation revised). *Sanzi jing*, pp. 17–18.
43. "Ode for Youth," p. 165 (original translation revised). *Youxue shi*, pp. 8–9.
44. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," p. 65 (original translation revised). *Taiping tianri*, p. 20.
45. Michael Simpson Culbertson, "A Letter from the Rev. M. S. Culbertson" (June 5, 1854), in *WR*, 137–45; pp. 138–39. Originally published in *Home and Foreign Record*, vol. 5 (November 1854), 337–40.
46. Meadows, "A Report from the *North China Herald*," p. 54.
47. Lindley, *Ti-ping Tien-kwoh*, pp. 320–21.
48. *Analects*, 12:17, p. 258. *Mencius*, 4A:4, p. 295.
49. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 26 (original translation revised). *Taiping zhaoshu*, p. 2.
50. "The Book of Heavenly Commandments," pp. 121–22 (original translation revised). *Tiantiao shu*, p. 7.
51. For Hong's proclamation on the separation of the sexes, see "The Book of Heavenly Decrees and Proclamations," p. 103. *Tianming zhaozhi shu*, p. 6. The distinction between the men's and women's quarters in the *Book of Heavenly Commandments* suggests that Hong may have enforced the separation of the sexes before the formal proclamation of January 1851.
52. "The Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature," p. 390. *Tianqing daoli shu*, p. 29. The *Taiping Rules and Regulations* further emphasized that men and women "must not give or take from each other's hands." "Taiping Rules and Regulations," p. 140 (original translation revised). *Taiping tiaogui*, p. 1. According to a report by Stanislas Clavelin, the restrictions on communication between men and women applied not only to ordinary civilians and soldiers, but also to the Taiping chiefs. Stanislas Clavelin, "A Letter by the French Jesuit Missionary Fr Stanislas Clavelin"

(January 6, 1854), in *WR*, 91–115; p. 110. Originally published in Nicolas Brouillon, *Missions de Chine: Mémoire sur l'état actuel de la mission du Kiang-nan, 1842–1855* (Paris: Julien, Lanier et Cie, 1855), 337–89.

53. "The Book of Heavenly Decrees and Proclamations," p. 109 (original translation revised). *Tianming zhaozhi shu*, p. 13. Augustus Lindley confirmed that the Taipings executed individuals found guilty of adultery. Lindley, *Ti-ping Tien-kwoh*, pp. 317–18.
54. *NRSV. Jiu yizhao shengshu*, Genesis, p. 24.
55. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 30 (original translation revised). *Taiping zhaoshu*, p. 6.
56. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," p. 61 (original translation revised). *Taiping tianri*, pp. 14–15.
57. "The Book of Heavenly Commandments," p. 122 (original translation revised). *Tiantiao shu*, p. 7.
58. Happer, "A Letter by the American Presbyterian Missionary Rev. A. Happer," p. 77.
59. Fishbourne, *Impressions of China, and the Present Revolution*, p. 179.
60. Clavelin, "A Letter by the French Jesuit Missionary Fr Stanislas Clavelin," p. 109. Augustus Lindley also claimed to have seen the decapitated heads of former opium smokers in Taiping territories. Lindley, *Ti-ping Tien-kwoh*, p. 77.
61. Alexander Wylie claimed in his reports that opium smoking was "a very common practice among them" (with even officers smoking it), but that the practice was "very much less common than among other Chinese" and "not done openly at all." Alexander Wylie, "A Report by Rev. A. Wylie [b]" (January 1859), in *WR*, 218–19; p. 219. Original document obtained from Foreign Office Correspondence, the Public Record Office, London. FO 17/322. Wylie, "A Report by Rev. A. Wylie [a]," p. 221.
62. Such justifications for the separation of the sexes are implicit in the *Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature*, which asserted that "at the beginning of a new undertaking, the country must come first and the family last, public interests first and private interests last." "The Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature," p. 390 (original translation revised). *Tianqing daoli shu*, p. 29.
63. Zheng Yangwen, *The Social Life of Opium in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 91. Zhou Yongming, *Anti-Drug Crusades in Twentieth-Century China: Nationalism, History, and State Building* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), p. 15.
64. The strength of Hong's moral convictions (in particular, his condemnation of lust and licentiousness) during the early pre-rebellion period is confirmed by Theodore Hamberg's account, which explains that Hong enforced the separation of men and women during worship and beat adulterers with wooden rods. Hamberg, *The Chinese Rebel Chief*, pp. 54, 65.

65. Liang, *Quanshi liangyan*, part 5, pp. 271–74.
66. Liang, *Quanshi liangyan*, part 6, p. 323.
67. Liang, *Quanshi liangyan*, part 2, p. 96. Spence, *God's Chinese Son*, p. 62.
68. Zheng, *The Social Life of Opium in China*, pp. 50–51, 65.
69. Zheng, *The Social Life of Opium in China*, pp. 52, 66.
70. Augustus Lindley saw the Taipings' abolition of opium smoking and prostitution as evidence that they were attacking "the inveterate vices of the Chinese" and "the evil indulgences which find full sway even in the most moral State of Europe." Lindley, *Ti-ping Tien-kwoh*, vol. 2, p. 691.
71. "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the New Testament," p. 237. *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, Revelation, p. 22.
72. "The Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature," pp. 364–65, 387.
73. *Classic of Filial Piety*, The Government of the Sages, p. 476 (original translation revised). Chinese text: *Xiao jing*, The Government of the Sages.
74. *Classic of Filial Piety*, An Orderly Description of the Acts of Filial Piety, p. 480. Chinese text: *Xiao jing*, An Orderly Description of the Acts of Filial Piety.
75. The *Book of Rites* also emphasized these core obligations in claiming that the "exemplary person" (*junzi*) reverently nourished his parents while they were alive and reverently sacrificed to them after they had died. "The Li Ki, XI–XLVI," in F. Max Müller (ed.), *The Sacred Books of the East*, vol. 28: *The Sacred Books of China: The Texts of Confucianism*, part 4, trans. James Legge (Oxford: Clarendon, 1885), 1–470 [hereafter *Book of Rites* [b]]; Ji Yi, section 1, p. 211 (original translation revised). Chinese text: *Liji*, Ji Yi, 4.
76. *Classic of Filial Piety*, Filial Piety in Relation to the Five Punishments, p. 481. Chinese text: *Xiao jing*, Filial Piety in Relation to the Five Punishments.
77. *Classic of Filial Piety*, The Scope and Meaning of the Treatise, pp. 466–67 (original translation revised). Chinese text: *Xiao jing*, The Scope and Meaning of the Treatise.
78. *Classic of Filial Piety*, Filial Piety in Inferior Officers, p. 470 (original translation revised). Chinese text: *Xiao jing*, Filial Piety in Inferior Officers.
79. "The Trimetrical Classic," p. 161 (original translation revised). *Sanzi jing*, p. 17. The reference to "longevity" (*xialing*) in this passage suggests that the writer was aware of the Chinese Bible's explanation of the fifth commandment (Exodus 20:12). *Jiu yizhao shengshu*, Exodus, p. 31. The phrase "repay their source" (*bao ben*), which was taken from the *Book of Rites*, shows that he was also familiar with the Confucian classics. *Book of Rites* [a], Jiao Te Sheng, section 2, pp. 430–31 (original translation revised). Chinese text: *Liji*, Jiao Te Sheng, 24.
80. "Ode for Youth," p. 164 (original translation revised). *Youxue shi*, pp. 3–4.
81. "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 27 (original translation revised). *Taiping zhaoshu*, pp. 2–3.

82. Hong emphasized the biblical origin of the duty even more strongly in the edited version of the *Taiping Imperial Declaration*, which changed the passage "the *Classic of Filial Piety* one should understand" to "the filial way one should understand." *Taiping zhaoshu*, 2nd edn, p. 2.
83. "An Essay on the Awakening of the Age," p. 692 (original translation revised). *Xingshi wen*, p. 5.
84. "An Essay on the Awakening of the Age," p. 688. *Xingshi wen*, p. 1. Yang Xiuqing discussed the final method of repayment in the *Taiping Songs on World Salvation*. "Taiping Songs on World Salvation," p. 241. *Taiping jiushi ge*, p. 3.
85. "The Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature," p. 390 (original translation revised). *Tianqing daoli shu*, p. 30.
86. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," p. 63 (original translation revised). *Taiping tianri*, p. 18.
87. "Taiping Songs on World Salvation," p. 244 (original translation revised). *Taiping jiushi ge*, p. 7.
88. Hong also emphasized the dual parentage of human beings (having both a corporeal father and a spiritual Father) and the primacy of the soul over the body in his annotations to the New Testament. He did not, however, discuss the moral implications of that belief. "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the New Testament," p. 232. *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, 1 Corinthians, p. 19.
89. *Yingjie gui zhen*, pp. 29–30.
90. Yang articulated these ideas in the *Recorded Words [of the Society] of the Holy Water* (*Shengshui jiyan*). Standaert, *Yang Tingyun*, p. 117.
91. Yang articulated these ideas in a summary of the second chapter of Ricci's *Tianzhu shiyi*. Standaert, *Yang Tingyun*, p. 118.
92. "Taiping Songs on World Salvation," p. 241 (original translation revised). *Taiping jiushi ge*, p. 3.
93. "Taiping Songs on World Salvation," p. 245 (original translation revised). *Taiping jiushi ge*, p. 7.
94. "The Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature," p. 398 (original translations revised). *Tianqing daoli shu*, p. 40.

CHAPTER 6

1. Hamberg explained that many of the God Worshippers' early prayers had been printed, "with some alterations or additions, in the Book of Religious Precepts." Hamberg, *The Chinese Rebel Chief*, p. 55.
2. According to Augustus Lindley, the Taipings (prior to 1859) restricted baptism to adults who had undergone a full religious examination. Lindley, *Ti-ping Tien-kwoh*, p. 315.
3. "The Book of Heavenly Commandments," pp. 114–15 (original translation revised). *Tiantiao shu*, p. 2.

4. "The Taiping Heavenly Chronicle," p. 66. *Taiping tianri*, p. 22. It is difficult to determine where exactly Hong learned about the practice of baptism by immersion. Hong's two-month stay with the American Baptist Issachar Roberts in 1847 is one possibility, but the *Taiping Heavenly Chronicle* claimed that Hong and his two associates had baptized themselves in 1843. Liang's *Good Words* explained that at baptism a priest sprinkled water on the candidate's head or body, but it did not mention immersion. Liang, *Quanshi liangyan*, part 6, pp. 298–99.
5. The reports of missionaries confirm this observation. Hamberg, *The Chinese Rebel Chief*, p. 55. Clavelin, "A Letter by the French Jesuit Missionary Fr Stanislas Clavelin," p. 104. Edkins, "A Report by Rev. Joseph Edkins," p. 243. Edkins, "Narrative of a Visit to Nanking," p. 286.
6. Edkins, "A Report by Rev. Joseph Edkins," p. 242. Roberts, "A Letter from Rev. I. J. Roberts [a]," p. 264.
7. "The Book of Heavenly Commandments," pp. 116–17 (original translation revised). *Tiantiao shu*, p. 4.
8. "The Book of Heavenly Commandments," p. 118 (original translation revised). *Tiantiao shu*, p. 5.
9. Medhurst, *Tianli yaolun*, p. 12.
10. "Important Observations Regarding Heavenly Principles," p. 354 (original translation revised). *Tianli yaolun* [Taiping version], p. 11.
11. "The Imperially Composed Thousand Word Edict," p. 415 (original translation revised). *Yuzhi qianzi zhao*, p. 14.
12. Taylor, *Five Years in China*, pp. 351–52.
13. Happer, "A Letter by the American Presbyterian Missionary Rev. A. Happer," pp. 77, 80. One of the Taipings' official documents confirms that they used sacrifices of pigs and oxen to worship and thank the Heavenly Father Shangdi. "The Book of Declarations of the Divine Will Made during the Heavenly Father's Descent to Earth [I]" (1852), in *TR*, 86–97; p. 96. *Tianfu xiafan zhaoshu* (Book of Declarations Made during the Heavenly Father's Descent to Earth [I]; 1852), p. 13. National Library of Australia (website). Available at http://nla.gov.au/nla.gen-vn514101 (accessed October 21, 2010). The *Poems of the Heavenly Father* also reveals that the Taipings presented melons and fruits to both the Heavenly Father and the Heavenly Mother. "Poems by the Heavenly Father," p. 628. *Tianfu shi*, p. 169 (poem 260).
14. J. L. Holmes, "A Letter from Rev. J. L. Holmes" (1860), in *WR*, 247–51; p. 250. Originally published in *North China Herald*, September 1, 1860. Josiah Cox also observed "a spread of fruits, cakes, and roasted pig" at a festival celebrating the birthday of the Heavenly King. Cox, "Journal of Rev. Josiah Cox [a]," p. 392.
15. Hamberg reported that the congregation at Guangxi sacrificed horses and oxen following the release of Feng Yunshan from prison. He also con-

firmed that the God Worshippers offered animal sacrifices at marriages, burials, and New Year celebrations. Hamberg, *The Chinese Rebel Chief*, pp. 55–56, 62.

16. Bray, *Technology and Gender*, pp. 102, 104, 107. According to Barend ter Haar, meat sacrifices were one of "the central sacrificial rites of Chinese religious culture." Ter Haar, "China's Inner Demons," p. 46.
17. Jessie G. Lutz and Rolland Ray Lutz, *Hakka Chinese Confront Protestant Christianity, 1850–1900: With the Autobiographies of Eight Hakka Christians, and Commentary* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1998), p. 159.
18. Jiwu Wang, *"His Dominion" and the "Yellow Peril": Protestant Missions to Chinese Immigrants in Canada, 1859–1967* (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006), p. 27. Interestingly, the Qing state used similar sacrifices to commemorate those who died fighting the Taipings. After the rebellion, prefectural and county magistrates carried out biannual sacrifices that included offerings of mutton, pork, grain, wine, fruit, and vegetables at the Manifest Loyalty Shrine in Hangzhou. Meyer-Fong, *What Remains*, p. 158.
19. *Jiu yizhao shengshu*, Genesis, pp. 5, 10.
20. *Jiu yizhao shengshu*, Exodus, p. 45.
21. *Jiu yizhao shengshu*, Numbers, p. 28.
22. In line with this interpretation, Augustus Lindley claimed that the Taipings' custom of offering sacrifices to God was "generated by their confusion of the ancient sacrifices mentioned in the Old Testament with the offerings and the Lord's Supper of the New." Lindley, *Ti-ping Tien-kwoh*, p. 315.
23. *Book of Rites* [a], The Royal Regulations, section 2, pp. 218, 220. *Book of Rites* [a], Yue Ling, section 3, part 2, p. 288. Chinese texts: *Liji*, Wang Zhi, 15, 20; *Liji*, Yue Ling, 71.
24. *Book of Rites* [a], Yue Ling, section 2, part 2, pp. 273–74. Chinese text: *Liji*, Yue Ling, 44.
25. *Book of Poetry*, Greater Odes of the Kingdom, Decade of Sheng Min, Sheng Min, pp. 465–67. *Book of Poetry*, Odes of the Temple and the Altar, Praise-Odes of Lu, Bi Gong, pp. 623–24.
26. *Mencius*, 4B:25, pp. 330–31. "The Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature," p. 370. *Tianqing daoli shu*, p. 5.
27. The *Book of Rites* describes sacrifices not only to God (Shangdi, Di), but also to ancestral spirits and the spirits of land, grain, hills, forests, and streams. *Book of Rites* [a], Yue Ling, section 2, part 3, pp. 277–78. *Book of Rites* [a], Yue Ling, section 4, part 3, p. 309. Chinese texts: *Liji*, Yue Ling, 52, 108.
28. Edkins, "A Report by Rev. Joseph Edkins," p. 246. Cox, "Journal of Rev. Josiah Cox [a]," p. 388.
29. "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the New Testament," p. 233 (original translation revised). *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, Hebrews, p. 10. Hong also defended sacrifices to God in his annotations to Matthew 9:13. "Hong

Xiuquan's Annotations to the New Testament," p. 228. *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, Gospel of Matthew, p. 12.

30. MacCulloch, *A History of Christianity*, p. 187.
31. Hans Küng has argued that, since bread is "nothing but a European import," in China and sinicized Asia "the supplication from the Lord's Prayer would be more meaningfully translated as 'Give us this day our daily *rice*.'" Küng, "A Christian Response," p. 263.
32. Hamberg, *The Chinese Rebel Chief*, pp. 59–62.
33. Hong described Yang as the Comforter (Quanweishi) and Wind of the Holy God following a communication in which Yang openly criticized the attitude and conduct of the Heavenly King. "Book of Declarations of the Divine Will Made during the Heavenly Father's Descent to Earth [II]," p. 219 (original translation revised). *Tianfu xiafan zhaoshu* [II], pp. 29–30.
34. Bridgman, "A Letter from Rev. E. C. Bridgman," p. 154.
35. Walter Henry Medhurst and Lewin Bowring, "A Report by W. H. Medhurst and Lewin Bowring" (July 14, 1854), in *WR*, 157–65; p. 163. Original document obtained from Foreign Office Correspondence, the Public Record Office, London. FO 17/214.
36. "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the New Testament," pp. 231–32 (original translation revised). *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, 1 Corinthians, p. 3.
37. "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the New Testament," p. 227 (original translation revised). *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, Gospel of Matthew, pp. 4–5.
38. "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the New Testament," p. 234 (original translation revised). *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, 1 John, pp. 5–6.
39. "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the New Testament," p. 234 (original translation revised). *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, 1 John, pp. 6–7.
40. "The Book of Heavenly Commandments," p. 115 (original translation revised). *Tiantiao shu*, pp. 2–3.
41. Hamberg, *The Chinese Rebel Chief*, pp. 69–70.
42. Xiao Chaogui spoke on behalf of Jesus, but "his words were milder than those of Yang." Hamberg, *The Chinese Rebel Chief*, pp. 70–71.
43. "The Book of Heavenly Decrees and Proclamations," p. 98 (original translation revised). *Tianming zhaozhi shu*, p. 1. Other Taiping documents confirm that the first communications took place in 1848. "The Trimetrical Classic," p. 159. *Sanzi jing*, p. 14. "Proclamations by Imperial Sanction," pp. 143, 150. *Banxing zhaoshu*, pp. 1–2, 9. "The Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature," p. 374. *Tianqing daoli shu*, p. 10.
44. "The Book of Heavenly Decrees and Proclamations," p. 99. *Tianming zhaozhi shu*, p. 1.
45. "The Book of Heavenly Decrees and Proclamations," p. 99 (original translation revised). *Tianming zhaozhi shu*, p. 2.
46. "The Book of Heavenly Decrees and Proclamations," p. 100 (original translation revised). *Tianming zhaozhi shu*, p. 3.

47. Although Hong authenticated the charismatic performances of Yang and Xiao, he rejected the communications of other God Worshippers at Guangxi (for example, a member of the Wang clan who spoke against the doctrine of Jesus), declaring that their words were "false" and "spoken under the influence of a corrupt spirit." Hamberg, *The Chinese Rebel Chief*, p. 71. Another explanation for Hong's endorsement of Yang is that he may have recognized that Yang's leadership and charismatic performances had helped to expand the movement during his absence from Guangxi. This explanation is favored by Robert Weller, who argues that Hong may have recognized that charismatic practices were "creating the enormous following he had dreamed about." Weller, *Resistance, Chaos and Control in China*, p. 73.
48. "The Book of Heavenly Decrees and Proclamations," pp. 99–100 (original translation revised). *Tianming zhaozhi shu*, p. 2.
49. "The Book of Heavenly Decrees and Proclamations," p. 102 (original translation revised). *Tianming zhaozhi shu*, pp. 4–5.
50. This title appears in the *Proclamations by Imperial Sanction* and the *Essay on the Awakening of the Age*. "Proclamations by Imperial Sanction," p. 142. *Banxing zhaoshu*, p. 1. "An Essay on the Awakening of the Age," p. 689. *Xingshi wen*, p. 2.
51. Hamberg, *The Chinese Rebel Chief*, p. 71.
52. "The Book of Heavenly Commandments," p. 116 (original translation revised). *Tiantiao shu*, p. 4.
53. "Taiping Songs on World Salvation," p. 240 (original translation revised). *Taiping jiushi ge*, pp. 2–3.
54. "Taiping Songs on World Salvation," p. 243 (original translation revised). *Taiping jiushi ge*, p. 6.
55. "The Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature," p. 374 (original translation revised). *Tianqing daoli shu*, p. 10. The *Essay on the Awakening of the Age* also discussed Yang's loss of hearing and speech following his healing rituals. "An Essay on the Awakening of the Age," pp. 689–90. *Xingshi wen*, p. 2.
56. "The Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature," pp. 374–75 (original translation revised). *Tianqing daoli shu*, p. 11.
57. Robert Weller has argued that spirit possession (that is, a spirit taking control of a medium's body and speaking directly through them) was the most common form of communication with the spirit world in south China. Weller, *Resistance, Chaos and Control in China*, pp. 72–73. The missionary Griffith John also claimed that, according to the Chinese people, nothing was more common "than for a spirit, or even a god, to take possession of a man and convert him into a mouthpiece." John, "A Pamphlet by Rev. Griffith John," p. 266.
58. Lutz and Lutz, *Hakka Chinese Confront Protestant Christianity*, pp. 90, 158. Jessie G. Lutz, "A Profile of Chinese Protestant Evangelists in the

Mid-Nineteenth Century," in Ku Wei-ying and Koen De Ridder (eds), *Authentic Chinese Christianity: Preludes to Its Development (Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries)* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2001), 67–86; p. 75.

59. Lutz and Lutz, *Hakka Chinese Confront Protestant Christianity*, p. 158. Seiwert, *Popular Religious Movements and Heterodox Sects in Chinese History*, pp. 38–39. Jack Potter has shown that the Cantonese shamans of Hong Kong were still performing these traditional rituals (communication and healing) in the 1960s. Jack M. Potter, "Cantonese Shamanism," in Wolf (ed.), *Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society*, 207–31; pp. 207–11, 215, 219–22.
60. Robert Weller has argued that spirit possession was "unusual in both quantity and quality in the Xunzhou region." In conducting anthropological research among residents of Xunzhou, Weller observed that possessed spirit mediums continued to play a significant role in the region. He also discovered, through interviews with particular residents, that Yao mediums had been used by other ethnic groups in Guangxi during the 1920s and 1930s. This observation suggests that shamanistic practices were so prevalent that they cut through ethnic boundaries at Guangxi. Weller also notes that while his findings relate to a much later period, "there is little evidence against such contact among ethnic groups" in the 1840s. Weller, *Resistance, Chaos and Control in China*, pp. 47–48, 70.
61. Weller has argued that the incorporation of local cultural traditions such as spirit possession "won the early God Worshipers much of their following." Weller, *Resistance, Chaos and Control in China*, p. 35. See also P. Richard Bohr, "The Taipings in Chinese Sectarian Perspective," in Kwang-Ching Liu and Richard Shek (eds), *Heterodoxy in Late Imperial China* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 393–430; p. 408.
62. *NRSV*.
63. These biblical descriptions of Christian charismata have inspired many Pentecostal movements in the history of Christianity. Montanism, or the New Prophecy (late second century), was one of the earliest Christian movements to stress the importance of spiritual gifts. Displays of charisma later became common in Europe and North America following the evangelical revivals of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. MacCulloch, *A History of Christianity*, p. 138. Allan Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 24.
64. Liang, *Quanshi liangyan*, part 9, p. 461.
65. *NRSV* (revised in accordance with the Chinese translation). Liang, *Quanshi liangyan*, part 9, p. 462.
66. "The Imperially Composed Thousand Word Edict," p. 412 (original translation revised). *Yuzhi qianzi zhao*, p. 7.

67. *Xin yizhao shengshu*, pp. 10, 12–13, 24, 31.
68. *Xin yizhao shengshu*, p. 14.
69. For Hong's condemnation of shamanism and witchcraft, see "The Taiping Imperial Declaration," p. 29. *Taiping zhaoshu*, pp. 4–5.
70. "The Book of Declarations of the Divine Will Made during the Heavenly Father's Descent to Earth [I]," pp. 92–93 (original translation revised). *Tianfu xiafan zhaoshu* [I], p. 8.
71. "The Book of Declarations of the Divine Will Made during the Heavenly Father's Descent to Earth [I]," pp. 93, 96. *Tianfu xiafan zhaoshu* [I], pp. 8, 13. The *Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature* also explained that the Heavenly Father exposed the treacherous plot of Zhou Xineng, leading to the execution of Zhou, his wife, and his son. "The Book on the Principles of the Heavenly Nature," p. 384. *Tianqing daoli shu*, p. 23.
72. "The Book of Declarations of the Divine Will Made during the Heavenly Father's Descent to Earth [I]," p. 94. *Tianfu xiafan zhaoshu* [I], p. 10.
73. "The Book of Declarations of the Divine Will Made during the Heavenly Father's Descent to Earth [I]," p. 95 (original translation revised). *Tianfu xiafan zhaoshu* [I], pp. 10–11.
74. "Book of Declarations of the Divine Will Made during the Heavenly Father's Descent to Earth [II]," p. 199 (original translation revised). *Tianfu xiafan zhaoshu* [II], p. 2.
75. "Book of Declarations of the Divine Will Made during the Heavenly Father's Descent to Earth [II]," p. 203 (original translation revised). *Tianfu xiafan zhaoshu* [II], p. 8.
76. "Book of Declarations of the Divine Will Made during the Heavenly Father's Descent to Earth [II]," p. 203. *Tianfu xiafan zhaoshu* [II], pp. 8–9.
77. "Book of Declarations of the Divine Will Made during the Heavenly Father's Descent to Earth [II]," p. 204. *Tianfu xiafan zhaoshu* [II], p. 10.
78. "Book of Declarations of the Divine Will Made during the Heavenly Father's Descent to Earth [II]," pp. 204–5. *Tianfu xiafan zhaoshu* [II], p. 10.
79. Yang's reference to himself and his colleagues as "younger brothers" was, within the context of the Taipings' hierarchical system of relationships, a symbolic acknowledgment of Hong's natural superiority.
80. "Book of Declarations of the Divine Will Made during the Heavenly Father's Descent to Earth [II]," pp. 205–6. *Tianfu xiafan zhaoshu* [II], pp. 11–12.
81. "Book of Declarations of the Divine Will Made during the Heavenly Father's Descent to Earth [II]," p. 206 (original translation revised). *Tianfu xiafan zhaoshu* [II], p. 12.

82. "Book of Declarations of the Divine Will Made during the Heavenly Father's Descent to Earth [II]," pp. 216–17. *Tianfu xiafan zhaoshu* [II], pp. 26–27.
83. Yang's status as the third son of God was implied in the *Second Book of Declarations*, which referred to Hong as the "second elder brother" (*erxiong*) in places. That title suggested that God had a third son who was the younger brother of both Jesus and Hong. For an example of Yang's describing Hong as the second elder brother, see "Book of Declarations of the Divine Will Made during the Heavenly Father's Descent to Earth [II]," p. 204. *Tianfu xiafan zhaoshu* [II], p. 10. Hong later confirmed Yang's identity as a son of God in his biblical annotations. "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the New Testament," p. 236. *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, Revelation, p. 12.
84. Qin and Wei were later executed after plotting to kill Shi Dakai (who had tried to discourage further violence following his return to Nanjing) and imprison Hong. For more detailed accounts of the fratricidal chaos, see Jen, *The Taiping Revolutionary Movement*, pp. 289–302. Spence, *God's Chinese Son*, pp. 242–44.
85. According to Jen Yu-wen, Yang was driven by "an insatiable desire for power" and the fratricidal chaos of 1856 originated in his attempt to usurp the throne. Jen, *The Taiping Revolutionary Movement*, pp. 41, 287. Pamela Crossley has also argued that Yang, by 1856, "was clearly attempting to displace Hong." Pamela Kyle Crossley, *The Wobbling Pivot: China since 1800, An Interpretive History* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), p. 113.
86. "Poems by the Heavenly Father," pp. 590, 639, 644, 648, 656. *Tianfu shi*, pp. 92–93, 188, 197, 203, 216–17 (poems 17, 18, 331, 333, 370, 391, 441, 442). The poems repeatedly emphasized that those who violated the seventh Heavenly Commandment (that is, committed adultery against Hong) would be executed. "Poems by the Heavenly Father," pp. 598, 612–13, 633–34, 650, 660. *Tianfu shi*, pp. 111, 138, 140, 178, 180, 206, 222 (poems 72, 156, 161, 292, 302, 401, 465).
87. In making this point, I am not necessarily denying that Yang was attempting to usurp Hong's position. My intention is simply to show that the evidence is ambiguous and that there are other, less judgmental ways of interpreting Yang's behavior.
88. Bays, *A New History of Christianity in China*, pp. 129–32.
89. According to Lian Xi, "Pentecostal effervescence" (speaking in tongues, trances, visions, healing, and exorcism) was a defining feature of Chinese Christian movements such as the True Jesus Church and the Jesus Family during the first half of the twentieth century. Lian, *Redeemed by Fire*, p. 15.

CHAPTER 7

1. Jen, *The Taiping Revolutionary Movement*, pp. 136–38. To counter any suggestion of moral hypocrisy (Hong prohibited the mixing of the sexes and even separated ordinary Taipings from their spouses), Hong asserted that the Heavenly Father had personally authorized him and other high officials to take multiple wives. "Hong Xiuquan's Annotations to the New Testament," p. 233. *Qinding qian yizhao shengshu*, Titus, p. 1.
2. Lindley, *Ti-ping Tien-kwoh*, p. 241.
3. Li, "Taiping Tianguo zongjiao sixiang yu Zhong Xi wenhua de guanxi," p. 16. Shen, *Taiping Tianguo shilüe*, p. 54. Zhao, "Taiping Tianguo yu jindai zaoqi de Zhong Xi wenhua jiaoliu," p. 23. Chen, "Shi lun Hong Xiuquan sixiang de yuanyuan," p. 4.
4. Levenson, "Confucian and Taiping 'Heaven,'" p. 451.
5. Lindley, *Ti-ping Tien-kwoh*, pp. 235, 301–4, 387.
6. Lindley, *Ti-ping Tien-kwoh*, p. 300.
7. In the second volume of his work, Lindley described British military intervention against the Taipings as an "evil policy." Lindley, *Ti-ping Tien-kwoh*, vol. 2, pp. 467, 548.
8. Jen, *The Taiping Revolutionary Movement*, pp. 143, 150.
9. Weller, *Resistance, Chaos and Control in China*, p. 33.
10. Weller, *Resistance, Chaos and Control in China*, pp. 33, 82.
11. "Poems by the Heavenly Father," p. 590 (original translation revised). *Tianfu shi*, pp. 92–93 (poems 17, 18).
12. "Poems by the Heavenly Father," p. 628. *Tianfu shi*, p. 170 (poem 265).
13. "Poems by the Heavenly Father," p. 618. *Tianfu shi*, p. 149 (poem 197). Poem 237 explained that the women could only look up to Hong's shoulders, as looking into his eyes was disrespectful to Heaven. "Poems by the Heavenly Father," p. 624. *Tianfu shi*, p. 162 (poem 237).
14. "Poems by the Heavenly Father," p. 624 (original translation revised). *Tianfu shi*, p. 162 (poem 238).
15. "Poems by the Heavenly Father," pp. 621, 640. *Tianfu shi*, pp. 155, 191 (poems 212, 343).
16. "Poems by the Heavenly Father," p. 640 (original translation revised). *Tianfu shi*, p. 191 (poem 343).
17. "The Book of Heavenly Commandments," p. 121 (original translation revised). *Tiantiao shu*, p. 7. Hong instructed the women to obey the seventh commandment in poems 72, 161, and 292. "Poems by the Heavenly Father," pp. 598, 613, 633. *Tianfu shi*, pp. 111, 140, 178 (poems 72, 161, 292).
18. "Poems by the Heavenly Father," p. 612 (original translation revised). *Tianfu shi*, p. 138 (poem 156).
19. "Poems by the Heavenly Father," p. 660 (original translation revised). *Tianfu shi*, p. 222 (poem 465).

20. Poem 462 forbade idle gossip about men and "evil things." "Poems by the Heavenly Father," p. 659. *Tianfu shi*, p. 222 (poem 462).
21. "Ode for Youth," p. 166 (original translation revised). *Youxue shi*, pp. 9, 11.
22. *Book of Rites* [a], Jiao Te Sheng, section 3, p. 441. Chinese text: *Liji*, Jiao Te Sheng, 35. Bray, *Technology and Gender*, p. 95.
23. *Book of Rites* [b], Hun Yi, p. 432. Chinese text: *Liji*, Hun Yi, 7. Ban Zhao, "*Admonitions for Women* (*Nüjie*)," in *SCT* 1, 821–24; pp. 823–24. Ko, *Teachers of the Inner Chambers*, p. 145.
24. Bray, *Technology and Gender*, pp. 143–44. Janet Theiss has suggested that during the eighteenth century "people at every level of society were aware of state-defined orthodoxy with regard to female virtue." Janet M. Theiss, *Disgraceful Matters: The Politics of Chastity in Eighteenth-Century China* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2004), p. 9.
25. Bray, *Technology and Gender*, p. 125.
26. Bray, *Technology and Gender*, pp. 128, 140.
27. Mark C. Elliott, "Manchu Widows and Ethnicity in Qing China," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. 41, no. 1 (January 1999), 33–71; pp. 38, 58. Theiss, *Disgraceful Matters*, pp. 28, 30–31. This state-sponsored chastity cult reached the peak of its popularity during the eighteenth century (especially during the reign of the Yongzheng emperor, r. 1722–35), when the Qing dynasty promoted the chaste woman as "a model of the proper subject" for its civilizing empire. Theiss, *Disgraceful Matters*, pp. 32–33.
28. Song Ruozhao, "*Analects for Women*," in *SCT* 1, 827–31; pp. 827–28.
29. Song Ruozhao, "*Analects for Women*," p. 830.
30. Song Ruozhao, "*Analects for Women*," p. 829.
31. Empress Xu, "*Instructions for the Inner Quarters* (*Neixun*)," in *SCT* 1, 831–36; p. 835.
32. Empress Xu, "*Instructions for the Inner Quarters* (*Neixun*)," p. 834. The work also discussed other characteristics (for example, honesty, humaneness, affection, and warmth), but none of those characteristics challenged the basic notion of women as submissive and subordinate to men.
33. Meyer-Fong, *What Remains*, pp. 176, 179.
34. Meyer-Fong, *What Remains*, pp. 190–91.
35. Meyer-Fong, *What Remains*, p. 191.
36. "Poems by the Heavenly Father," pp. 619, 621, 654, 663. *Tianfu shi*, pp. 151, 156, 212, 227 (poems 200, 217, 425, 485).
37. "Poems by the Heavenly Father," p. 643. *Tianfu shi*, p. 196 (poem 364).
38. "Poems by the Heavenly Father," pp. 645–46. *Tianfu shi*, p. 199 (poem 375).
39. "Poems by the Heavenly Father," p. 652 (original translation revised). *Tianfu shi*, p. 209 (poem 416).

40. "Poems by the Heavenly Father," p. 653 (original translation revised). *Tianfu shi*, pp. 211–12 (poems 422, 423). These instructions may have been inspired by the *Book of Rites*, which offers a similar description of the correct procedure for handling the carriage of a ruler. *Book of Rites* [a], Qu Li, section 1, part 5, pp. 94–98. Chinese text: *Liji*, Qu Li 1, 75–78.
41. Hakka women fought alongside men during the Taipings' early battles. Lindley, *Ti-ping Tien-kwoh*, pp. 89, 303. Jen, *The Taiping Revolutionary Movement*, pp. 87, 300.
42. "Poems by the Heavenly Father," pp. 602–3. *Tianfu shi*, p. 118 (poem 99).
43. "Poems by the Heavenly Father," p. 622. *Tianfu shi*, p. 157 (poem 221).
44. "Poems by the Heavenly Father," p. 633. *Tianfu shi*, p. 178 (poem 293). Poem 269 also outlined the duty of the palace women to report their fellow workers. "Poems by the Heavenly Father," p. 629. *Tianfu shi*, p. 172 (poem 269).
45. "Poems by the Heavenly Father," p. 654 (original translation revised). *Tianfu shi*, p. 212 (poem 424).
46. "Poems by the Heavenly Father," p. 639. *Tianfu shi*, p. 188 (poems 331, 333).
47. "Poems by the Heavenly Father," pp. 644, 648, 656 (original translation revised). *Tianfu shi*, pp. 197, 203, 216–17 (poems 370, 391, 441, 442).
48. "Poems by the Heavenly Father," p. 663 (original translation revised). *Tianfu shi*, p. 227 (poem 485).
49. The *Book of Heavenly Commandments* emphasized the soteriological importance of obedience to the Ten Commandments. "The Book of Heavenly Commandments," pp. 112, 123. *Tiantiao shu*, pp. 1, 8.
50. "Poems by the Heavenly Father," p. 652. *Tianfu shi*, p. 209 (poem 416). Similarly, poem 496 instructed its readers to obey the Heavenly Commandments so that they could "live for millions of years." "Poems by the Heavenly Father," p. 665. *Tianfu shi*, p. 230 (poem 496).
51. "Poems by the Heavenly Father," p. 651. *Tianfu shi*, p. 207 (poem 408).
52. "Poems by the Heavenly Father," p. 652 (original translation revised). *Tianfu shi*, p. 210 (poem 418).
53. "Book of Declarations of the Divine Will Made during the Heavenly Father's Descent to Earth [II]," pp. 216–17. *Tianfu xiafan zhaoshu* [II], p. 26.
54. Poem 418 used these terms in discussing the duty of the palace women to obey Hong's edicts (see note 52).
55. *NRSV*. The first ten poems (with the exception of poem 7) were taken from the *Book of Heavenly Decrees and Proclamations*, and so (assuming that poem 7 was also taken from existing materials) poem 11 was the first original poem of the collection. "The Book of Heavenly Decrees and Proclamations," pp. 100–3. *Tianming zhaozhi shu*, pp. 3–6.

56. "Poems by the Heavenly Father," p. 589 (original translation revised). *Tianfu shi*, pp. 89–90 (poem 11).
57. One example (poem 418) has already been cited in this chapter (see note 52). Another important example is poem 339, which instructed the women to revere their "husband and Lord" (*fuzhu*) alongside Heaven. "Poems by the Heavenly Father," p. 640 (original translation revised). *Tianfu shi*, p. 190 (poem 339).
58. "Poems by the Heavenly Father," p. 662. *Tianfu shi*, p. 225 (poem 475).
59. *Mencius*, 3A:4, pp. 251–52 (original translation revised).
60. *Classic of Filial Piety*, The Service of the Ruler, p. 486. Chinese text: *Xiao jing*, The Service of the Ruler.
61. *Book of Rites* [b], Biao Ji, p. 338 (original translation revised). Chinese text: *Liji*, Biao Ji, 22.
62. Sin Yee Chan has similarly argued that "reciprocity does not necessarily eliminate the hierarchical nature of a relationship," since "the parties involved often do not reciprocate with goods of the same kind." Sin Yee Chan, "Gender and Relationship Roles in the *Analects* and the *Mencius*," in Daniel A. Bell (ed.), *Confucian Political Ethics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 147–74; p. 157.
63. Ming Taizu, "Placard for the Instruction of the People," in *SCT* 1, 788–91; p. 790. Zürcher, "A Complement to Confucianism," p. 85.
64. "Poems by the Heavenly Father," p. 634 (original translation revised). *Tianfu shi*, p. 180 (poem 302).
65. "The Book of Heavenly Commandments," p. 121 (original translation revised). *Tiantiao shu*, p. 7.
66. Hong may have found further support for this interpretation in the wording of the fifth commandment (Taiping version: "Be filial and obedient to your father and mother," *xiaoshun fumu*), which was identical to the first command of the Six Maxims. Hong's patriarchal views may also have been reinforced by biblical passages on the obedience of wives (for example, Ephesians 5:21–24, Colossians 3:18–19, Titus 2:3–5, 1 Peter 3:1–7).

Chapter 8

1. Joseph Edkins, despite rejecting various aspects of the Taipings' religion, praised Hong's attitude toward fellow Christians from the West: "He looks upon the Christians of England and America as those who have had Christianity in its earlier forms, and as good men who seek the welfare of the Chinese by teaching them the true religion." Edkins, "Narrative of a Visit to Nanking," p. 270.
2. As further evidence of the Taipings' special reverence for the Bible, the *Poems of the Heavenly Father* asserted that those who wished to ascend to heaven should read the Holy Scriptures. The book also instructed the pal-

ace women to read a chapter of the Bible every day (alternating between the Old and New Testaments) and to read the Heavenly Commandments on the Sabbath. "Poems by the Heavenly Father," pp. 628–29, 654. *Tianfu shi*, pp. 170, 213 (poems 265, 427).

3. The Taipings' conscious association with Christianity was also observed by Joseph Edkins: "If they are to be exterminated by their opponents, they will continue to be iconoclasts, as they will continue to call themselves Christians till their power is broken." Edkins, "Narrative of a Visit to Nanking," p. 279.
4. The idea that traditional China was static and unchanging, and thus transformed by the agency of the modern Western world, can be seen in the works of Immanuel Hsü and John Fairbank, among others. For typical statements of the tradition-modernity paradigm, see Immanuel C. Y. Hsü, *The Rise of Modern China*, 6th edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 6. John K. Fairbank and Ssu-yü Teng (eds), *China's Response to the West: A Documentary Survey, 1839–1923* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979), p. 1. C. R. Boxer has applied this view of traditional China to the whole of Asia. According to Boxer, Asian society "wished only to retain its traditional and static forms" and so "remained unchanged until the 19th and in many instances until the 20th century." C. R. Boxer, *The Dutch Seaborne Empire, 1600–1800* (Harmondsworth: Pelican, 1973), p. 217.
5. Other historians have emphasized the importance of the interplay between external and internal forces in modern Chinese history. For example, see Zheng, *The Social Life of Opium in China*, p. 204. This approach moves beyond the China-centered paradigm, which emphasizes internal processes of change. Paul A. Cohen, *Discovering History in China: American Historical Writing on the Recent Chinese Past* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), p. 153. Paul A. Cohen, *China Unbound: Evolving Perspectives on the Chinese Past* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), p. 42. Philip A. Kuhn, *Origins of the Modern Chinese State* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002).
6. Philip Jenkins and Andrew Walls have both predicted that the Christian faith, in accordance with its geographical spread, will become increasingly associated with the cultural worlds of Latin America, Africa, and Asia. Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 20. Andrew F. Walls, "From Christendom to World Christianity: Missions and the Demographic Transformation of the Church," in Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History*, 49–71; p. 65.
7. Andrew Walls, "The Mission of the Church Today in the Light of Global History," *Word and World*, vol. 20, no. 1 (Winter 2000), 17–21; pp. 19–20.

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